

# ISRAEL PUTNAM



LOUISE SEYMOUR HASBROUCK



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ISRAEL PUTNAM







WAR NEWS FROM LEXINGTON



# ISRAEL PUTNAM

("OLD PUT")

A STORY FOR  
YOUNG PEOPLE

BY  
LOUISE SEYMOUR (HASBROUCK)

AUTHOR OF "LA SALLE"

*Zimmer*  
"

*Putnam scored with ancient scars  
The living records of his country's wars.  
"Columbiad," JOEL BARLOW, 1787.*



ILLUSTRATED

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY  
NEW YORK                      LONDON

1916

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OCT -2-1916

Printed in the United States of America

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no. 1.

TO  
MY FATHER



## FOREWORD

For the material used in the following book I am chiefly indebted to William Farrand Livingston's "Israel Putnam," to William Cutter's "Life of Putnam," and to various histories of the period.



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I

A JOLLY BOYHOOD



# I

## A JOLLY BOYHOOD

**I**N the days when forests covered most of New England—when the Indian war-whoop still echoed on its borders—when children ate corn-meal porridge from pewter porringers, and grown people stirred their hot drinks with a poker heated in the fireplace—in those good old days, two centuries ago, there lived in the neighborhood of Old Salem, Massachusetts, a jolly, sturdy, red-cheeked boy by the name of Israel Putnam.

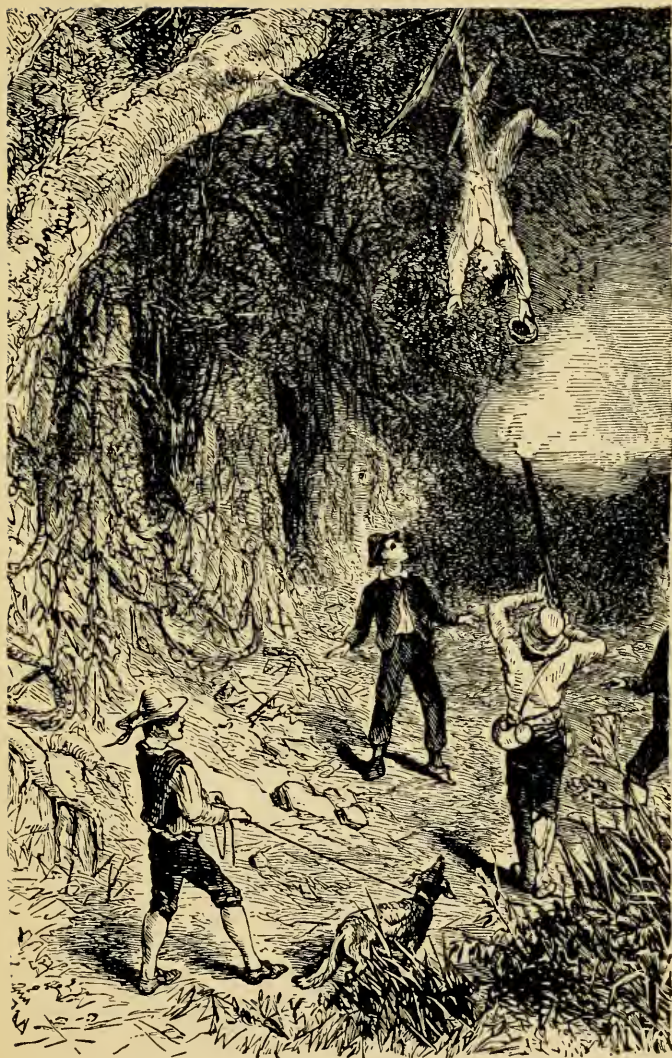
In all the things that require strength, courage, energy and quickness of decision, Israel excelled his playmates. He was the leader in old-fashioned games and sports, such as running, wrestling, throwing the bar, and football. When he grew up, his dashing exploits during the French and Indian War made him the hero of all New England; he entered the Revolution as a general, and rose to be second to Washington in military rank. "His

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name," said Washington Irving, "has long been a favorite one with young and old; one of the talismanic names of the Revolution, the very mention of which is like the sound of a trumpet." He was the first of the famous men of the new nation to have his biography written; he had a happy faculty for being present at the most interesting occasions of his epoch; he was noted for his unselfish patriotism, for his absolutely flawless courage, for his hairbreadth escapes, for his kindness and jollity; so, though he had not the genius of Washington, Hamilton or Franklin, I think American young people will find his career well worth reading about.

The very first glimpse we have of our hero is a strange one; it shows him to us upside down! This is how it happened.

When Israel was a small boy, he and some of the other boys of his age went birds-nesting. In those days of a rougher age, boys hadn't learned the cruelty of the sport as they have now. Israel, as usual, was more daring than any of his playmates, and foolishly climbed out on a small limb till it broke beneath him. Crash! went he; and his



EARLY ADVENTURE OF GENERAL PUTNAM





## A JOLLY BOYHOOD

career seemed likely to end then and there! As he came hurtling down, however, the seat of his pantaloons caught on a branch in such a way that he hung head downward!

"Are you hurt, Israel?" called his comrades anxiously.

"No," answered the unfortunate boy, "but I'm caught. I can't get down."

"If we had a knife," said some one of the boys, "we could cut away the limb."

This was a bright idea, but unfortunately it was of no use, as no one had a knife. Another boy suggested burning the tree down, a plan quite impractical on the face of it.

"Hurry up and do something," called Israel, in distress, his face redder than ever from a rush of blood to the head. "You fellows would stand there talking all night. I tell you it's no fun hanging here."

But none of the boys could think what to do. Finally, Israel called out,

"Jim Randall, is there a ball in your rifle?"

Jim Randall, who was noted as a crack shot, seldom went out without his flintlock. The woods

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at that time were full of wild turkeys and other game.

“Yes,” said he.

“Then shoot at that small limb that holds me here,” cried Israel.

“What? Cut you down?” asked Jim, horror-struck. “I might miss and shoot you.”

“Never mind. That would be better than for me to die by hanging, which I’ll certainly do if I hang here much longer. Shoot, I tell you,” he added, as Jim hesitated.

“But you’ll fall!”

“Shoot!”

Jim Randall brought his rifle to his shoulder, took careful aim, and fired.

The splinters flew. Israel Putnam dropped to the ground unhurt, except for severe bruises. The next day he went back and got the nest—an action which cannot be praised except as showing a general tendency to perseverance!

Once at least during his boyhood Israel made a visit to Boston. It was a small town then, but it looked very large to the country boy. As he was walking along the principal street, staring at the

## A JOLLY BOYHOOD

sights, a Boston boy began making fun of his countrified appearance and behavior. Israel stood it as long as he could—he was never one to pick a quarrel without cause—but finally, seeing that a crowd was collecting, he challenged his persecutor to a fight, and, in spite of the other's larger size, succeeded in whipping him. The city boy slunk away, while the spectators applauded.

Another story which is told of Israel happened some years later and concerns a practical joke which he played upon a slave owner. At that time many New Englanders owned slaves. This man, one of the Putnams' neighbors, had a colored fellow named Cudge, who seems to have absorbed the New England spirit of independence into his blood, for he was particularly refractory. One day Cudge's master made up his mind to flog him.

We are not told whether Israel disapproved of this punishment, but as he was always noted for his kindheartedness, he probably did. At any rate, when the slave owner asked his aid in flogging Cudge, Israel promised his help, with a mental reservation.

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“You catch him,” said he, “and I will tie him for you.”

The farmer caught Cudge, who was in the fields, and brought him to the barn, where Israel was ready with a strong rope, one end of which he had fastened to a beam. The other he had made into a noose. When Cudge and his master entered, Putnam, instead of slipping the noose over the black man alone, slipped it over both of them, master and man, binding their arms down tightly so that they could not hurt each other. Then he went off to give them time to appreciate the joke! After a while, he returned and loosed them. History does not say what names the slave owner called Israel; but Cudge escaped his whipping, and was in such a good humor that he was easy to manage for days to come.

Another adventure of Putnam's boyhood was his taming of a vicious bull, which he accomplished by jumping on the bull's back and riding it round and round the pasture till the animal was exhausted.

What of Israel Putnam's schooling during this rough-and-tumble, healthy, adventurous boyhood of his? Echo answers, “What?” To tell the truth,

## A. JOLLY BOYHOOD

he received very little. There was probably no school near him, and as there were no cars in those days, few carriages, none but the roughest roads, mere Indian trails through the primeval forest, he could not attend one even a few miles distant. The children of his neighborhood may possibly have met, during the winter, at the house of some of their number whose father or mother volunteered to teach them reading, numbering, and writing. Or the minister may have kept school, in addition to his other duties. Israel probably attended some such class. But we know that his education did not go far. His letters in later days were fearful and wonderful, even in those times of erratic spelling and still more erratic capitals. Israel himself was ashamed of them, and when he became a general always had a secretary attend to his correspondence. When he had children of his own, you may be sure he saw to it that they received the education he lacked and of which he was beginning to feel the need.

But if he lacked book knowledge, he was learning other important things all during his boyhood. He learned how to fell the mighty trees of the for-

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est, how to clear and cultivate the soil, how to care for cattle and horses, how to build log-houses, how to plant and graft fruit-trees, how to ride, and how to shoot. He knew from his cradle, almost, more woodcraft than a modern Boy Scout can possibly know in these days of vanished forests. And often, probably, he and his boy friends talked with Indians, the subdued remnants of the tribes conquered during King Philip's War; and gathered from them information as to savage ways and customs which was to stand them in good stead later on. Often, too, in the evening around the log fires, Israel heard blood-curdling stories of the recent French and Indian raids upon the Maine and Massachusetts borders, but a few miles north of Salem; he heard of peaceful farmers shot down in their fields by the lurking savages, he heard of French priests and French gentlemen leading their bloodthirsty allies on the war-path; he heard of whole settlements massacred in the dead of night, and of women and little children taken away captive through the snowy forests to Canada; he heard all these grim stories, which were only too true, and had happened but a few years before his birth; and he resolved, then

## A JOLLY BOYHOOD

and there, that when he grew up he would do his part to protect his country from future outrages.

So he passed through all the adventures and excitements and the hard work of a boy's life in a pioneer country, and grew to a sturdy and strong manhood.





II

A WOLF-HUNT AND OTHER  
MATTERS



## II

### A WOLF-HUNT AND OTHER MATTERS

**T**HERE were so many things to tell of Israel Putnam's boyhood in the first chapter, that three items most important, of course, in all true and proper biographies were left out. They are, the date of the hero's birth, a description of his birthplace, and an account of his family, even back to the remotest ancestors.

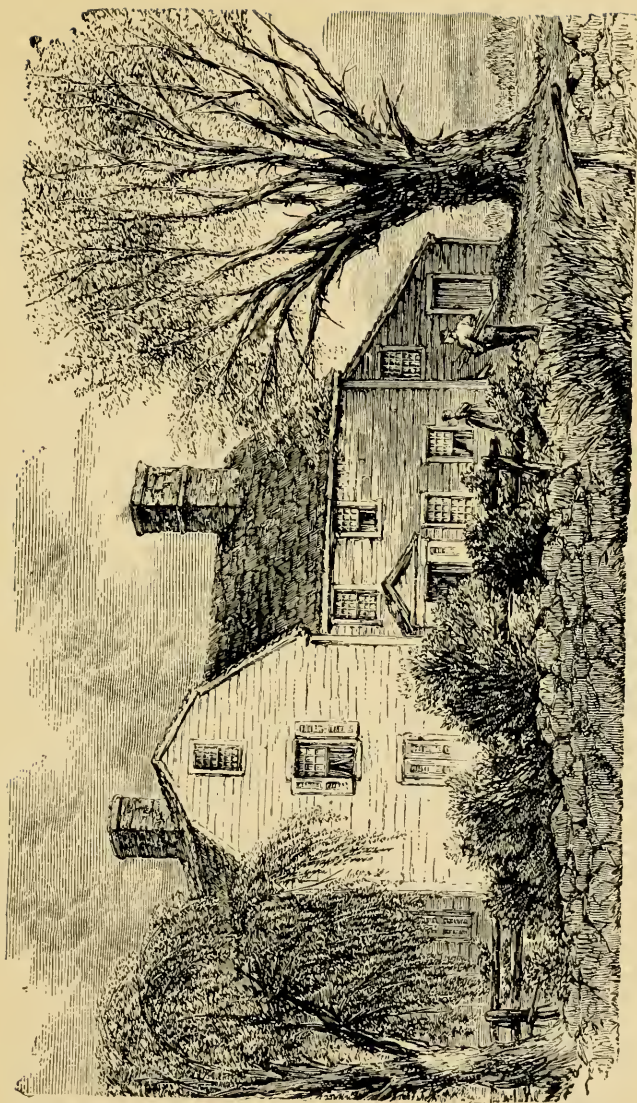
As those are the passages the impatient reader is only too apt to skip, in order to reach as soon as possible the really interesting part of the story, we shall treat of them very shortly, in order not to subject anyone to temptation—though, after all, there are two or three things connected with them worth mentioning.

In the first place, the Putnams were an old, established family in Salem, Israel's great-grandfather having come to America from England and

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settled here in 1641: In the second place, Israel Putnam, who saw the light of day on January 7, 1718, was the twelfth child of his parents, a circumstance which ought to prove something to those who collect statistics about great men and small families. In the third place, he was born in a house which is still standing, and in the possession of the Putnam family, in Salem Village, now Danvers, Massachusetts, and this neighborhood was the scene, you will remember, of the famous witchcraft persecutions, which caused so much terror and so much suffering to innocent people.

Israel's father, Joseph Putnam, was one of the few who dared to disapprove openly of this frenzy, and of the hanging of the so-called witches on the testimony of some hysterical children. For this reason, his life was in great danger from his excited, bigoted neighbors, and even from his own relatives. For six months, or until the witchcraft days were ended, he kept his flintlock loaded and ready to hand, and his fastest horse saddled in the stable, ready to make his escape in case he himself should be accused of the crime. The independence of spirit and moral courage which he showed on this occa-



BIRTHPLACE OF GENERAL ISRAEL PUTNAM



## A WOLF-HUNT AND OTHER MATTERS

sion were handed down to his son Israel in no small measure.

Israel's father died when Israel was five years old; but a few years after he acquired a stepfather. This was Captain Thomas Perley, of Boxford, Massachusetts, a village about fifteen miles distant from Salem. Israel, with the rest of the younger children—there were six of them then—went with his mother to live at the house of his stepfather. He remained there for ten years, or the greater part of his boyhood. His new parent was a captain of the militia, and probably laid the foundations of Israel's military training.

During these years, Israel by no means forgot his Salem friends, but visited them frequently. There was a special attraction for him in Old Salem. Can you guess what, or, rather, who it was? A pretty girl! Her name was Hannah Pope, and she was the daughter of some former neighbors of the Putnams. Her family, like the Putnams, had been among the first settlers of the village.

In those days young people married early. There was no difficulty about the young men making a living, for the living was all around them in the

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shape of rich lands only waiting to be cultivated. The lot of a bachelor was a hard one without a woman to cook and keep house for him; and a girl who did not marry by the time she was twenty was sadly pitied, and called an "ancient maid," or, in Boston, a "thorn-back."

Hannah Pope never gave anyone a chance to call her these uncomplimentary things. Before she was eighteen she had listened favorably to the blunt but impetuous wooing of the stalwart, black-haired, blue-eyed Israel Putnam, who had been her sweetheart, probably, ever since she was a tiny girl working her first sampler. In July, 1739, she and Israel were married in her father's house. Soon after the young husband took his wife to a new house he had built with his own hands on the portion of the Salem farm he had inherited from his father. There, about a year later, their first child was born, and named Israel, after his father.

About this time settlers from Roxbury, Salem, Lynn, and other Massachusetts towns were moving out to eastern Connecticut, a part of the country which so far had not been settled, but where there were unusually fertile lands awaiting cultivation.



## A WOLF-HUNT AND OTHER MATTERS

Israel Putnam heard of this emigration, and felt his own pioneer blood stirring. He sold some of his land in Salem, and with this money bought, in partnership with his brother-in-law, Joseph Pope, a farm in the district then called "Mortlake," which was afterwards annexed by the town of Pomfret, and is now a part of Brooklyn, Connecticut. Israel bought it from Governor Jonathan Belcher, of Boston. He probably made a preliminary trip there in 1739 to look it over. In 1740 he moved his wife and baby there.

We can imagine their slow journey on horseback over the seventy-five miles of rough trail that led from their old home to the new. When they arrived mother and baby were sheltered under a hastily improvised shed of bark, while the men—Israel had a black servant with him—felled trees for the new house, cut the logs, hauled, notched them and set them in place. In a few days a substantial log cabin was erected, and Hannah Putnam helped to chink up the cracks with moss and clay. If it was like all the other log cabins of the period, it had a fireplace made of the great Connecticut boulders, an opening which served for a window, and

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another for a door. They could have brought little furniture with them; and, perhaps, for that first winter they sat on log stools, and slept on beds made from cedar and hemlock boughs. But they soon improved their condition.

At the end of two years Israel was able to buy out his brother-in-law's share of the property, and had paid the whole amount of his debt to Governor Belcher. In a few years he looked around him at fertile fields, enclosed with stone fences, at fat, sleek cattle, and sheep, and goats. There was plenty of food on his table and in his storehouse: corn and pumpkins, turnips, squash, and other vegetables, milk and cream, bacon and ham. He had brought apple-trees, pear-trees and other fruit trees from Old Salem, planted and grafted them with great care, and they promised soon to bear fruit. With the extra produce of his farm he could buy such furniture as they needed to make comfortable a new house which he had built to take the place of the first log cabin.

All this meant work, and hard work, on the part of the young landowner, who had only his negro servant to help him in the fields. His young

## A WOLF-HUNT AND OTHER MATTERS

wife did her full share in the cooking and cleaning, the spinning and weaving and fashioning of home-made clothing, milking cattle, dairy work, and baby tending, which filled the lives of our pioneer great-great-grandmothers to overflowing. Israel's family grew fast. Nearly every year a baby arrived, until the farmhouse was filled to overflowing with sturdy, tumbling youngsters.

Meanwhile other settlers had been coming to the community, attracted by the rich farm lands. They soon learned to admire the sterling qualities of Neighbor Putnam. An incident which occurred now made him truly the hero of the countryside. By the efforts of Putnam and others the county had been almost entirely rid of wild beasts; but there still remained one old she-wolf who was so wary that nobody could catch her, and who killed countless sheep and goats every year. Each fall she retreated to the forests west of them, and returned the next spring with her young whelps. One morning Putnam found seventy of his sheep and goats dead in the field, and many more poor little lambs and kids terribly wounded by the wolf's teeth and claws. This was too much! He and

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five other men agreed to hunt alternately in pairs until the wolf was captured and killed. Fortunately, a light snow had fallen, which made it possible to detect her tracks, which were unmistakable, since one of her paws, which had been caught in a steel trap, was shorter than the others.

The men followed the trail to the Connecticut River, and found that the wolf had turned and come back towards Pomfret. They turned too, and at three o'clock in the morning finally traced it to the opening of a cave, about three miles from Putnam's farm. There the wolf had taken refuge, and all their efforts to dislodge her proved futile. They sent in dogs—among them Putnam's old bloodhound—and the animals returned wounded and frightened, and neither coaxing nor punishment could make them go in again. An attempt was made to smoke the wolf out by burning straw and sulphur inside the entrance. No result!

Putnam then asked his negro if he would go in.

The negro shook his head and rolled his eyes most emphatically. "Please, Massa Putnam, don' send dis poor nigger in dar," he begged.

"Well," said Putnam, stripping off his coat, "I'm

## A WOLF-HUNT AND OTHER MATTERS

not going to have another coward in my family. *I'll go in.*"

He had the others fetch him some strips of birch-bark for torches, and tie a long rope around his legs, so that they could pull him out when he kicked it as a signal. Then he got down on his hands and knees and crawled into the slippery hole.

The cave is described by Major Humphreys, Putnam's earliest biographer, who visited it during Putnam's lifetime, as being about two feet square and very slippery with ice at the opening; it descended obliquely fifteen feet, then ran horizontally ten more, then ascended gradually sixteen feet towards its end. It was not high enough in any place for a man to stand upright, nor was it more than three feet wide in any place. This "Wolf's Hole" is still pointed out to visitors in Pomfret, Connecticut.

Putnam crawled in, in absolute darkness except for the circle of light cast by his flaring torch. On and on he went, until, at the very end of the cavern, he saw two balls of fire glaring at him. They were the eyes of the wolf. Upon seeing the torch

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she growled horribly. Putnam kicked the rope, as a signal to his friends to pull him out. They thought him in danger, and obeyed in such haste that his shirt was stripped over his head and he was badly cut in passage. Nevertheless, he prepared to enter a second time. He loaded his gun with nine buckshot, and with it in one hand and the torch in the other painfully crawled towards the wolf.

When he drew near her she howled, rolled her eyes, snapped her teeth, and dropped her head between her legs in preparation to spring. There was not an instant to be lost. Putnam raised his gun to his shoulder and fired at her head. There was a deafening report—a violent “kick” from the gun—smoke filled the narrow cave to suffocation—and before he knew clearly what had happened, Putnam found himself outside the cave, pulled there by his anxious friends while still stunned from the shock of the discharge in such narrow quarters.

He waited for the smoke to clear away; a third time he went in, not knowing yet whether the wolf were killed or all the more savage on account

## A WOLF-HUNT AND OTHER MATTERS

of wounds. But when he approached her this time she lay motionless. He put the torch to her nose and found that she was dead. He took hold of her ears, kicked the rope, and was pulled out for the third time, dragging his trophy with him. A shout went up from the spectators. Putnam and his prize were made the center of an excited throng, who escorted them to a house nearby, where a "wolf-jubilee" was held. The wolf's carcass was hung to a spike driven into a beam, and for days the colonists came from far and wide to view the body of their late enemy and praise the spirit of the man who had slain her.

With this exploit Putnam's fame for courage was firmly established; he was called "Old Wolf Putnam"; and when the Revolution began, comparisons were made between his early adventure and his readiness to attack the "British Wolf" in its den.

But we are still a long way from the Revolution. The wolf episode occurred not long after the year 1740. Years of peaceful home life and profitable farming lay before the young colonist; and after that he was to fight in many stirring battles and skirmishes for his mother country before he cast

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aside forever her uniform, and gave his heart and his sword to the cause of liberty.

These peaceful years bore fruit, not in events of interest to the story-teller, but in prosperity and happiness. Putnam's children were growing up around him, his wealth was increasing yearly, and he had every inducement to stay at home, when, suddenly, the war-clouds grew darker and darker on the horizon, the first skirmishing shots, like the patter of hail of a coming storm, rang from the Ohio Valley, and the New England men were called upon to defend their frontier in a campaign against the French and Indians in the Lake Champlain region.

Israel Putnam was one of the first to respond to the call to arms in Connecticut.



III

BATTLE OF LAKE GEORGE



### III

#### BATTLE OF LAKE GEORGE

**E**ARLY in the summer of 1755 the new house on the Putnam farm witnessed the first of many partings. Israel, the oldest boy, now a well-grown lad of sixteen, lifted the flintlock from its accustomed place over the mantel, and handed it to his father.

“Remember what I’ve told you about the farming, son,” said Israel the elder, “and help your mother all you can in every way.”

“Don’t cry, Hannah,” he said to his wife, tenderly kissing her. “I’ll be back in no time, just as soon as we’ve put those rascally Frenchmen where they belong.”

The younger children clustered about, hardly comprehending why their father was going to leave them.

“He’s going to fight the Indians,” whispered the next oldest boy to a little sister—at which the lat-

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ter began to cry. It was not strange the word Indian should frighten her out of her wits, for she had heard many terrible and true stories about them.

“There, there,” said her father, soothing her, “be a brave girl. See, father has his gun and his hatchet, and no Indian will dare come near him.” Then, to divert her mind, “Fetch my powder-horn from that nail where it hangs. Now—I’m ready! I don’t look much like a real soldier yet, maybe—but I surely will by the time I get back from the campaign.”

Indeed, Israel, like most of the other Connecticut volunteers in the Crown Point campaign, looked anything but soldierlike. He wore his ordinary farming clothes, carried only his flintlock, hatchet and powder-horn, with one of Hannah’s home-spun blankets strapped at his back, to keep him warm on cold nights. After taking a final farewell of his family, he made his way down the path under the apple trees, through the gate in the stone fence, and out into the road.

Presently he met other volunteers going in the same direction, and joined the main body some-

## BATTLE OF LAKE GEORGE

where on the road to Albany. Their general was Phineas Lyman. He had been a tutor at Yale, then a lawyer, and now he was an officer who knew little more about soldiering than the men under him, but he was courageous and had good common sense. The other officers were mainly men chosen by the soldiers themselves from their own friends and acquaintances, and this made discipline difficult at times. One of them was Colonel Ephraim Williams, who made his will at Albany, leaving a sum of money to found the school which has since become Williams College; another was Lieutenant-Colonel Seth Pomeroy, a gunsmith from Northampton. After many days' march through the woods, the volunteers arrived at the little Dutch town of Albany, where they encamped on the "Flats" and meadows below the town.

They found here several hundred Mohawk Indians, friends of William Johnson, the commander of the whole army. These red men, hideously painted, with feathers in their hair, were enjoying themselves to their hearts' content, eating and drinking as much as possible at the expense of their allies. Johnson, to please them, let them paint his

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face, too; he danced the war-dance with them, and cut with his own sword the first slice from the ox which had been roasted whole for their feast. Johnson was an Irishman who lived in the Mohawk valley, and was such a favorite with the savages that they had made him a Mohawk chief. It was mainly his influence which kept them from going over to the French side.

The army stayed in camp near Albany till midsummer, far too long a time to please the impatient Putnam and his friends. The delay was due to friction and bad management among the colonies. They had not yet learned how to pull together.

During this waiting the news of Braddock's defeat at the hands of French and Indians in the Ohio Valley spread a gloom over the camp. The English soldiers falling by regiments from the bullets which whizzed from among the trees—not an enemy to be seen! It was terrible! "The Lord have mercy on poor New England!" one of the volunteers wrote home.

And now the turn of the New England men was coming. Toward midsummer news was

## BATTLE OF LAKE GEORGE

brought by Mohawk scouts that Baron Dieskau, a German baron in the service of the French, was approaching Crown Point from Canada with eight thousand men. Johnson set his army on the move. Putnam was one of those who advanced up the Hudson to a spot called the Great Carrying Place, where they set to work to build a fort called Fort Lyman, afterwards changed to Fort Edward. He was with a large detachment which moved from there across country to Lake George, a distance of fourteen miles. They marched through the thick forest, the axmen going in front to cut down trees to make a rough road for the others, who guided the train of Dutch wagons. In twenty-four hours they reached Lake George, that beautiful sheet of water near which so many exciting things were to happen.

They encamped there, and began to throw up earthworks. Three hundred Mohawks came to join them. On the following Sunday the Indians had to hear a long sermon, preached by one of the army chaplains, and dealing with theology which was quite over their heads, even when translated by the interpreter. But they listened with great

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courtesy, for their politeness in such matters put white people to shame.

Another week went by. The next Sunday was a beautiful day, fair and warm, with light showers. Toward sunset, after the prayers and sermons were over, an Indian scout came in with the report that he had found the trail of a body of men—Dieskau's army—moving from South Bay (a small lake to the west of Lake Champlain, and emptying into it) toward Fort Lyman. Johnson sent out a scout to reconnoiter and warn those at Fort Lyman. He did not, apparently, imagine that the enemy would attack his own camp.

The poor scout on his way to Fort Lyman was killed by the Indians of Dieskau's army. Dieskau had meant to attack Crown Point, but on reading the letter which the scout had carried, decided to move upon Lake George instead. He understood that the force there was large; but—"the more there are, the more we shall kill!" he exclaimed.

Meanwhile Johnson and his officers had decided to send out two detachments of five hundred men each, through the forest, to catch Dieskau's men in



## BATTLE OF LAKE GEORGE

their retreat. Hendrick, the chief of the Mohawks, disapproved of this plan. He picked up a stick and broke it; then he picked up several sticks, and showed that together they could not be broken. The officers grasped his meaning, and Johnson ordered the two detachments to be joined into one. Still the wise old Indian shook his head. "If they are to be killed, they are too many," he said; "if they are to fight, they are too few." But in spite of his disapproval, he decided to go with them, and as he was too old and fat to walk, the English gave him a horse, which he rode at the head of the column. Two hundred of his warriors accompanied the party.

Putnam was one of the soldiers in this detachment. About eight o'clock on Monday morning they left camp, under the command of Colonel Ephraim Williams. They advanced along the rugged valley in which their camp lay. There was no open ground but the rough road along which they marched. To the left of them were dense thickets; to the right, woody slopes.

Suddenly, when they were about three miles from camp, old Hendrick in the front detected some

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sign—a rustle of a leaf or breaking of a twig, which warned him that the enemy was near. It was too late to warn the others. The French and Indian advance guard of Dieskau's army was all around them, concealed in the thickets at the left and the slopes at the right, so that not a man nor a gun was visible. From the left side spattered a murderous fire. The column doubled up, as Dieskau said afterward, "like a pack of cards." Hendrick fell dead, and so did Colonel Williams. The men in the rear ran forward to the help of their comrades, when suddenly a sharp fire from the slopes on the right opened upon them. The men retreated in a panic; but a part of Williams' regiment, under Lieutenant-Colonel Whiting, rallied and covered the retreat of the rest by firing from behind trees like the French and Indians, then falling back and firing again. Putnam was one of these quick-witted and brave soldiers. "And a very handsome retreat they made," writes Pomeroy, "and so continued till they came within about three quarters of a mile of our camp. This was the last fire our men gave our enemies, which killed great numbers of them; they were seen to drop as pigeons." This affair was

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long called by New Englanders "the Bloody Morning Scout."

Putnam had escaped scot free. He now joined those in the fort who were preparing for the attack. They threw up a barricade of wagons, boats, trunks of trees, anything that came handy, behind which the men could stand, crouch, or lie flat. Dieskau had paused about a mile from the camp to collect his forces. Soon they appeared—the regulars in the road in regular platoons, the French and Indians at the sides, running helter-skelter through the woods, shouting, yelling, and firing from behind trees. Those in the fort responded. Seth Pomeroy wrote to his wife: "Perhaps the hailstones from heaven were never much thicker than their bullets came; but, blessed be God! that did not in the least daunt or disturb us." Johnson was wounded, and retired to his tent. Lyman took command. The battle raged furiously for four hours. Putnam, though his courage never faltered, must have felt about it as did a comrade of his who wrote to his wife: "It was the most awful day my eyes ever beheld; there seemed to be nothing but thunder and lightning and perpetual pillars of smoke."

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At length Dieskau was wounded, and the French began to give way. Putnam and the other fighting farmers, raw recruits though they were, saw their advantage, leaped over their barricade, and fell upon them, using hatchets and the butts of their guns as weapons. The French were entirely routed. Dieskau was carried prisoner into Johnson's camp, where his wounds were dressed by order of the general before those of Johnson himself. Johnson's Mohawks meanwhile held a long and angry conversation with Johnson in his tent. They were not at all satisfied with the outcome.

Putnam heard afterward that Dieskau had asked Johnson what they wanted.

"What do they want?" answered Johnson. "To burn you, by G——, eat you, and smoke you in their pipes, in revenge for three or four of their chiefs that were killed. But never fear; you shall be safe with me, or else they shall kill us both." He put a strong guard around Dieskau and in the morning sent him with a large escort to Fort Lyman, whence he was sent to Albany, and then to New York. Johnson's conduct on this occasion is of particular interest when compared with that of the French

## BATTLE OF LAKE GEORGE

officers at Ticonderoga, which will be described later.

So ended the battle of Lake George, Putnam's first engagement—his "baptism of fire." The provincial soldiers, according to contemporary testimony, "in the morning fought like good boys, about noon like men, and in the afternoon like devils." None had been stauncher or braver than Putnam. He was rewarded by soon after receiving his commission as second Lieutenant in one of the newly-arrived Connecticut regiments.



IV  
RANGING





## IV

### RANGING

**W**HO is that man?" asked Putnam one day of a fellow soldier, pointing to a tall, sinewy stranger, in rough woodsman's clothes, who had that day come to camp and been admitted to General Johnson's tent.

"That? Oh, that's Robert Rogers, the ranger—the man that knows as much about the woods as any Indian varmint alive," answered his comrade. "Used to be a smuggler, they say," he went on, lowering his voice, "and between you and me, he's been mixed up in some pretty queer businesses. A hard customer, but brave—there's no man braver than Bob Rogers. He knows how to fight the Indians, and how to find out all the secrets of the Frenchies yonder at Ticonderoga. So Johnson's going to make him a Major, I hear, and put him at the head of a corps of sharpshooters who're not skeered to beat the Indians at their own game.

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Come to think of it, Put," drawled the Yankee slyly, "you'd be pretty good at that sort of work yourself. You can see and hear pretty near as good as an Indian now, you're a good shot, and you ain't afraid of much, that's a fact."

Putnam laughed, and did not answer. Not long after he met Rogers, and the two men struck up an acquaintance. Rogers discovered that Putnam had the qualities of an ideal ranger, and before the summer was over he arranged that he join his band. Another valued officer in the rangers was John Stark, of New Hampshire.

The following interesting description of the life of the rangers is from Parkman's "Montcalm and Wolfe." "The best of them [the rangers] were commonly employed on Lake George; and nothing can surpass the adventurous hardihood of their lives. Summer and winter, day and night were alike to them. Embarked in whale-boats or birch canoes, they glided under the silent moon or in the languid glare of a breathless August day, when islands floated in dreamy haze, and the hot air was thick with odors of the pine; or in the bright October, when the jay screamed from the woods, squir-

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rels gathered their winter hoard, and congregated blackbirds chattered farewell to their summer haunts; when gay mountains basked in light, maples dropped leaves of rustling gold, sumachs glowed like rubies under the dark green of the unchanging spruce, and mossed rocks with all their unpainted plumage lay double in the watery mirror: that festal evening of the year, when jocund Nature disrobes herself, to wake again refreshed in the joy of her undying spring. Or, in the tomb-like silence of the winter forest, with breath frozen on his beard, the ranger strode on snow-shoes over the spotless drifts; and, like Durer's knight, a ghastly death stalked ever at his side. There were those among them for whom this stern life had a fascination that made all other existence seem tame."

Putnam's quick wit, courage and strength soon made him conspicuous in this service, and his adventures were many. Here is one of them.

One night he and Lieutenant Robert Durkee were sent to reconnoiter the enemy's camp at a place in the forest called The Ovens, near Ticonderoga. It was black as pitch, and as they made

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their way through the woods not a sound was to be heard but the hooting of some owl or the rustle of a startled rabbit. Putnam and Durkee walked noiselessly; they had learned how to avoid even the breaking of a twig which might betray them to some lurking Indian. Presently they saw the glow of fires and knew they were near the enemy's camp. They crept nearer on their hands and knees, for it was their bold plan to get inside the circle of fires, which they supposed the French, like the English, placed at the outside of their camp.

Suddenly a voice cried, "*Qui vive?*" a gun cracked sharply, and the darkness became alive with dim figures. The American rangers were in the heart of the French camp. The latter, they learned, posted their fires in the center, not the outside, of their camp.

The sentinel's bullets whistled about their ears. Savages hurled their tomahawks. Putnam never knew exactly what happened next, but in a moment he found himself out of the crowd and running through the woods, dodging dark trunks of trees and tearing his clothing on the underbrush. He could hear footsteps close behind him, and could

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almost feel the pursuer's breath on his neck. Soon his foot tripped, and he fell headlong into a soft, sticky pit. Crash! came the other man on top of him. Quick as a flash, Putnam grasped his tomahawk. He was just about to bring it down on the skull of the other, when a familiar voice exclaimed, "Stop! it's Durkee!"

Putnam's hand fell limp, and he whispered, "You said that just in time."

"One of the devils got me in the thigh," said Durkee, "but I managed to run in spite of it. Put, have you got a drink anywhere about you?"

Putnam cautiously twisted around and got hold of his canteen. He gave it to Durkee, but the other, after raising it eagerly to his lips, put it down with a low exclamation of disgust. "Not a drop in it," he whispered.

Putnam felt of it and found a bullet-hole. He was glad the canteen had it instead of himself. He and Durkee crawled out of the clay-pit and hid behind some rocky ledges all night. In the morning Putnam found that the blanket which he had worn folded at his back had fourteen bullet holes in it!

They cautiously made their way back to camp

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and arrived unharmed. They had found out what they wanted to know about the position and strength of the enemy at "The Ovens"—but "The Ovens" had been a hot place for them!

As fall came on, the men at Fort Lyman and Lake George grumbled and shivered in their thin summer clothing with but one blanket apiece. The rain water stood in their tents; and the sick, of whom there were many, suffered terribly from the cold and wet weather. Discipline among these obstinate, independent New Englanders was very poor, and they were just about to mutiny and take French leave when the welcome order came to break camp.

Some soldiers and officers, however, had to stay to guard the newly built forts. Few volunteered for this disagreeable duty—but one of those who did so was Israel Putnam. Day after day he saw his friends and comrades leave for home; and he was homesick as he watched them. He knew that, during the winter nights to follow, while he scouted the snowy forests, or shivered in the gloomy fort, they would be sitting around their blazing hearths, telling stories of the summer campaign to admiring

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listeners. He, too, had a comfortable home and a family who wished him back; but his country's need was always first to Israel Putnam, and he served her with a whole-hearted devotion that cold and heat and peril could not shake.

The long winter dragged on. By day and night the rangers, with fur caps on their heads and thick mittens on their hands, scouted in the neighborhood of Lake George, now stealing on snow-shoes through the forest, now gliding on skates over the icy floor of the lake. They were invaluable in keeping watch of the enemy and harassing them by guerrilla warfare. Some also were at work on the forts and the road between the Hudson River and Lake George.

Putnam was relieved from service on May 30, 1756, and granted by the Connecticut Assembly "fifty mill'd dollars . . . as gratuity for . . . extraordinary services and good conduct in ranging and scouting the winter past for the annoyance of the enemy near Crown Point and discovery of their motions."

He returned home, at last, to the great delight of his family; there was a tiny baby there whom he

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had never seen—his daughter Eunice—who had been born during the winter. How eagerly the children must have gathered about him, to hear the stories of his exciting adventures!

It was only during this month of May, 1756, that war was formally declared between France and England, after a year of preliminary fighting on this continent. Putnam had but a short time to enjoy himself with his family. In June he returned to the Hudson, where the volunteers were mustering for an attack on Ticonderoga and Crown Point. He was now a Captain of the Fourth Company in Lyman's Regiment.



V

THE DISAPPEARING SENTINEL  
AND OTHER ADVENTURES



## V

### THE DISAPPEARING SENTINEL AND OTHER ADVENTURES

**T**HE great general, Montcalm, who had taken the place of the wounded Dieskau as commander-in-chief of the French forces, lay at Ticonderoga, on Lake Champlain, the most advanced post of the French, which he had strongly garrisoned. The English called it a "hornet's nest," and it lived up to its name, for swarms of French and Indians poured out from it, lurked in the woods all about, and made the service along Lake George and the upper Hudson even more dangerous than before.

Putnam was again at Fort Edward. Every night, for several nights in succession, the sentinel standing at one of the posts had been fired upon and killed by an unseen enemy. Strict precautions were ordered. The sentinel was commanded to call out, upon hearing even the slightest noise

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in the bushes, "Who goes there?" and if no one answered, to fire instantly. In spite of this, the sentinels continued to disappear. Finally, even the bravest men in camp declined to volunteer for such dangerous duty. They were about to draft men, when Putnam, who, as a commissioned officer, was not in line for this service, volunteered to take the post. He was accordingly made sentinel for the night, and stationed himself at the spot.

Toward midnight he heard a faint crackling in the bushes. It was so slight that another would not have noticed it, or would have thought it caused by some animal; but Putnam was by this time too well trained in scouting work to let such a sound escape him. He called rapidly three times, "Who goes there?" then raised his gun and fired in the direction of the sound. He heard a groan, and going to the spot discovered a large Indian, one of the western Pottawattomies, dressed in a bear-skin, with a quiver full of arrows. The rascal had received his death-wound. He had been the cause of the disappearing sentinels, and with him the trouble ceased.

From time to time large bands of half-savage

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Canadians, and Indians wrapped in colored blankets, with lances or guns in their hands, painted and decked with feathers, approached by way of South Bay and Wood Creek, to inflict as much harm as they could on outlying divisions of the English. An English provision train was attacked during the summer, halfway between Fort Edward and the fort at the foot of Lake George, called Fort William Henry, by six hundred of these marauders, and much booty was carried off. Rogers and Putnam with one hundred volunteers were ordered to go in boats down Lake George, then to leave the boats, and cross by land to the Narrows of Lake Champlain, where they were to try to intercept the enemy.

They executed the movement as directed with such speed that they reached the Narrows half an hour before the retreating French and Indians. When the latter's boats came in view, the rangers opened fire on them from the bushes, stopped many, and would have captured all if the wind had not blown the boats rapidly beyond gunshot into South Bay. Those who escaped carried the news of the attack to Ticonderoga, and a detachment was at

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once sent out to cut off the rangers on their way back to Fort Edward. These missed the rangers during the night, but discovered them the next day on Lake George, near Sabbath-Day Point. Both parties had taken to their boats—the French and Indians were about three hundred in number and sure of easy victory. But the rangers waited until the opponents were within pistol shot, and then fired with such effect with their wall-pieces, blunderbusses, and small arms that the French and Indians were routed and retreated to Ticonderoga. One ranger only was killed and two slightly wounded, while the loss on the other side was very heavy. Putnam used this practice of not firing till the enemy were near to good effect in several of his Revolutionary battles, notably that of Bunker Hill.

Toward the end of the summer the English and Colonials at Fort Edward heard of Montcalm's brilliant victory and their own disastrous defeat at Oswego. This meant that the English must give up for the present their scheme of attacking Fort Niagara and Fort Frontenac (at the site of Kingston, Ontario)—and it meant, too, that Montcalm

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could concentrate all his men at Ticonderoga and Crown Point. Webb, the incompetent general who had been sent from England to be commander-in-chief of the American forces, was so frightened that he abandoned his plan of attacking Ticonderoga, and ordered the forces to make a stand at Fort William Henry, at the very foot of Lake George.

The season of 1756 drew to a close, while French and English watched each other defiantly from opposite ends of Lake Champlain. There were no more battles, but the rangers were especially active on the English side. Putnam was among the most noted of them. General Winslow, the commander at Lake George, wrote Loudon that Putnam returned in October "from the best scout yet made." "Being a man of strict truth," he adds, "he may be entirely trusted." Putnam had set out on Lake George in a whaleboat with six men, rowed to a point on the east side, opposite the place where Hague, New York, now stands, and, hiding his boat there, had struck across country northeast toward Lake Champlain. He and his men, in spite of the French and Indians with which the woods were

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swarming, managed to come within three miles of Ticonderoga. They climbed a high mountain and reconnoitered it thoroughly. They descended the mountain, and, getting still nearer the fort, saw three Frenchmen, whom they chased until the latter escaped inside the French lines. Then Putnam and his men climbed the mountain again and went west on the top of the ridge, taking in every detail of the enemy's outposts between Ticonderoga and Lake George. This was certainly scouting reduced to a fine art!

November 1, 1756, Montcalm's forces began their retreat to Canada to spend the winter. Ticonderoga was left with a guard of five or six companies. Winslow's men also melted away, the regulars being sent to Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, where they were quartered, the provincials gladly hastening to their New England homes. Putnam probably went with the latter. He had fairly earned his vacation; and there is no mention of his name in the activities of the rangers during the coming winter.

He took home with him a powder-horn, which his children examined eagerly. It had been carved



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in camp by one of the soldiers, and had the following inscription:

CAPT. ISRAEL PUTNAM'S HORN MADE AT FORT WM.  
HENRY NOV'R 10TH A. D. 1756

There was also carved upon it a rough map of the route of the army from Albany to Lake George, showing the stations and forts. Below were the capitals W A R, with some curious designs between them. There was also carved on it the stanza:

When bows and weighty spears were used in Fight  
Twere nervous limbs Declrd [declared] a man of might  
But now Gun-powder scorns such strength to own  
And Heroes not by Limbs but souls are shown.

How glad the children must have been that they had a real hero for a father! This powder-horn is still in existence and is owned by a great-grandson of Putnam's—Israel Waldo Putnam, of Rockland, Ohio. He has also a pair of pistols with holsters, a magnet, and a brass bullet-mold of the famous ranger's.



VI

HARASSING MONTCALM



## VI

### HARASSING MONTCALM

**I**T was a wonderful, still, moonlight night in the early summer of 1757. A silver path was splashed on the quiet water of South Bay, making the woods which rose steeply on each side of the narrow stream look very dark by comparison. Presently might have been heard, if the bank concealed any listeners, the faint drip-drip of paddles. A line of Indian canoes stole silently down the narrow stream. They were manned chiefly with Indians, dark-skinned, half-naked, their bravery of war-paint and feathers, and their crafty, fierce countenances plainly visible in the moonlight. In the foremost canoe was a man of a different species—an officer, dressed in a rough woodland uniform. It was Marin, the famous partisan leader.

A sound from the west bank, trivial but startling in its result, broke the stillness. It was but the click of a fire-lock upon stone, but it spoke to those

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in the canoes as loudly as if it had been a cannon shot.

“O-wis-s-sh!” hissed Marin, sharply, with a prolonged whistle of his breath through his teeth. It was an Indian signal. The line of canoes huddled together like a flock of frightened sheep. Suddenly from the high western bank sounded a single gun shot. At once a volley echoed it. The bullets fell thick and fast upon the French and Indians in the canoes, easy targets in the moonlight. Many fell back into the boats, groaning. The rest, confused at the sudden attack, and unable to see their adversaries, fired wildly in the direction of the sounds. The firing from the ledge continued, but the French soon discovered from its comparative infrequency that the body of men concealed there must be small. They on their side numbered five hundred. Marin gave orders for his men to land and surround the firing party.

The leader of this was no other than Israel Putnam. He had returned to Fort Edward in the early summer, and finding that the rangers' services were still indispensable, had taken up the work again with his usual activity. He was now at the

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head of a band of only sixty men, who had concealed themselves behind a stone parapet on the west bank they had built and covered with pine trees for the purpose. From this ambushade they had been watching for some hours for the arrival of the much larger force of French and Indians they knew were on their way to harass the English.

Anticipating that the enemy would attempt to surround him, Putnam early in the fight sent small detachments up and down the shore to prevent them. These succeeded in repulsing the French all night, while those behind the ledge kept up their galling fire. At dawn, however, the enemy succeeded in landing. Putnam and his party were now in great danger, as their numbers were so much smaller, and they had only a short supply of ammunition left. Putnam accordingly gave the order to "swing their packs." They retired rapidly up Wood Creek, with the loss only of three men, while the French and Indians lost half their number. It was the greatest victory any of the scouting parties had won during the war.

On the way back to Fort Edward shots suddenly rang through the woods and one of Putnam's men

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was wounded. Putnam gave the word for his men to charge. They were about to do so when a voice cried, "Stop! We are friends," and one of Putnam's provincial comrades, also a ranger, plunged through the bushes with his men. They were out for a scouting trip, and he had recognized Putnam's voice as he gave the order to fire in time to prevent the disaster.

"Friends or enemies," shouted Putnam, brusquely, "you all deserve to be hanged for not killing more, when you had so fair a shot!"

About a month later Putnam and his rangers were stationed on an island in the Hudson not far from Fort Edward, when they heard the sound of firing from near the fort, and knew a band of the enemy must be attacking. Without an instant's delay Putnam plunged into the river, calling his men to follow him, and swam or waded across. On the other bank, near the fort, was a swamp. Here a party of fifteen men from the fort, under guard of fifty regular soldiers, had been cutting timber. Suddenly an arrow from the thickets had whizzed above the head of one of them. He gave the alarm, when two hundred men, chiefly Indians, under Ma-



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rin, began firing from the bushes at the unfortunate workmen and soldiers.

Those in the fort closed the gates, and called in the outposts. Putnam and his men arrived to find that the men in the swamp were being left to the mercy of the much larger force of French and Indians. There was no hesitation in Putnam's mind. He hastened at once to their rescue. As he passed the fort General Lyman, unwilling to see him and his men sacrificed, mounted the parapet and called to him to go no further.

Putnam had not yet learned that in war obedience to a superior officer is the first of all the virtues. He disregarded the General's command and marched on to the assistance of the harassed party. After fighting for an hour, he led a sudden charge into the swamp where the Indians were concealed. Surprised at the attack, they gave way, and Putnam and his men chased them into full retreat. On this occasion Lyman overlooked the crime of his rash subordinate. The same afternoon Putnam was put in command of two hundred men and sent in further pursuit of the enemy. The following account of his tactics is from the pen of Rufus Put-

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nam, a talented young cousin of Israel's. He was eighteen years of age, and had joined the provincial army at the beginning of this year's campaign.

"We marched on the Indian trail until sunset; Captain Putnam then ordered three of us to follow the trail a mile or more farther and there lie close till it was quite dark, and to observe if any came back, 'for,' said he, 'if they do not embark in their boats tonight, they will send a party back to see if they are pursued.' We went according to orders, but made no discovery. And here I would remark that Captain Putnam's precaution struck my mind very forcibly as a maxim always to be observed, whether you are pursuing or pursued by an enemy, especially in the woods. It was the first idea of generalship that I remember to have treasured up."

On the next day, July 24, Putnam and his rangers returned, "having discovered an encampment of about five hundred or six hundred men near Fort Anne." This was an old fort halfway up Lake George, which had been used in former wars, and was now abandoned and falling into decay.

General Webb was especially uneasy at this time, for many of his soldiers had been taken away by

## HARASSING MONTCALM

General Loudon in an attack on Louisbourg, in Cape Breton Harbor, and with the small forces he had left he feared an attack from Montcalm. Rumors had reached him that Montcalm was gathering his forces at Ticonderoga for an attack upon Fort William Henry, at the lower end of Lake George. He accordingly set out under the escort of Putnam and some men to reconnoiter. When the party reached Fort William Henry, they found that the rangers there had been unsuccessful in their attempts to reconnoiter at night. Putnam wished to undertake the task in broad daylight, with only five men. Webb thought this too dangerous, but finally allowed him to take eighteen volunteers down Lake George in three whale-boats. On this expedition Putnam's party had a narrow escape. They were hotly pursued by a swarm of French and Indians in canoes, but managed to get away. Putnam had seen enough to convince him that the rumors about Montcalm's intentions were true.

He informed Webb of his opinion. Webb agreed with him, but told him not to speak of his discoveries to anyone else, and to prepare to return to Fort Edward with him at once.

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“What!” exclaimed Putman, too blunt to hide his astonishment. “Your Excellency does not intend to neglect so fair an opportunity of giving battle should the enemy presume to land?”

“What do you think we should do here?” returned the General curtly. He was by no means so anxious for the fray as was his brave subordinate.

Putnam reluctantly escorted the cautious General back to Fort Edward. There the latter, who found himself more at home in writing than fighting, penned a letter to the Governor of New York, asking for militia reënforcements.

“I am determined to march to Fort William Henry with the whole army under my command as soon as I shall hear of the farther approach of the enemy,” he declared boldly. You will see how well he lived up to his resolution. Meanwhile he sent one thousand men, with valuable baggage and camp equipment, to Fort William Henry, in spite of Putnam’s remonstrances. Putnam seems to have had a premonition that the fort would be taken. He longed, however, to be of use there, and fairly ate his heart out with impatience when Webb kept him at Fort Edward.

VII

THE TRAGEDY OF FORT WILLIAM  
HENRY



## VII

### THE TRAGEDY OF FORT WILLIAM HENRY

**I**N the meantime all that Putnam had surmised, and more, was taking place at Ticonderoga. All that spring Montcalm had been busy gathering his Indian allies, singing the war-song with them and listening with forced patience to their interminable speeches. More than one thousand Indians from the West and North, some of whom had never before visited a French settlement, were gathered in Montreal. They were eager to see the great chief who had taken Oswego. One of them, surprised at Montcalm's short height, had addressed him thus:

“We wanted to see the famous man who tramples the English under his feet. We thought we should find him so tall that his head would be lost in the clouds. But you are a little man, my Father. It is when we look into your eyes that we see the greatness of the pine-tree and the fire of the eagle.”

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Soon the whole force, French regulars, Canadian *coureurs de bois* (bush-rangers, or literally, runners of the woods), and Indians, took up their march towards Lake Champlain and reached Ticonderoga by the end of July. It was a strange mixture of races and civilizations which gathered in this forest stronghold. Here were officers from Old France, in their white uniforms, fine gentlemen with the exquisite manners and speech of court dandies, who could bow over a lady's fan with all the grace in the world—and could also witness the butchery of wounded prisoners and the taking of scalps by their savage allies with an equally pleasant nonchalance. Here were the savages themselves—the “Christian” Indians from the missions of the Penobscot, Caughnawaga, and La Presentation on the St. Lawrence, who showed their Christianity by an extra garment or two and by attending confession before going to battle. Otherwise, they were as ferocious as the heathen Indians from the West, who were there in great numbers, naked except for a strip of cloth, horribly painted, with rings of brass wire in their ears, and beads and feathers tied to their scalp-locks. These “made



## THE TRAGEDY OF FORT WILLIAM HENRY

medicine" before the battle, and hung up offerings of dead dogs or other valuable gifts to the Manitou, or Great Spirit, to ensure success. One tribe, the Iowas, spoke a language which no interpreter understood. The Christian Indians were well provided with guns. The heathens carried lances, stone war-clubs, or bows and arrows, with quivers made from the skins of beasts. All the Indians were, almost without exception, splendidly straight, tall, well-formed men. Their appetite for both meat and drink was enormous, and they consumed, where they could get them, three weeks' rations in a day.

On the first of August the rays of the setting sun reddened the water of Lake George till it looked like blood. A great fleet was gathered there—flat-boats, heavy bateaux, and graceful birch canoes. The hour had come—and a force of seventy-six hundred French and Indians was on its way to attack Fort William Henry. All night they traveled. The next day they were on the shore of the lake but a few rods from the fort.

Colonel Monro, a brave Scotch veteran, was in command of the English fort with a small force. When his scouts informed him that the French

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and Indians were approaching in large numbers, he sent a messenger post haste to Webb, at Fort Edward, fourteen miles away.

Now was the time for Webb to move, before the fort was invested and approach to it cut off. Instead, he sat down at his desk and madly scribbled a note to New England for help which could not possibly arrive in time.

Putnam and the other brave soldiers at Fort Edward were wild to go to the rescue when they heard the sound of heavy firing. They waited anxiously. Surely Webb would do something now to help his comrade in distress.

But no command came for them to go, in spite of many other notes which Webb received from Colonel Monro. Day after day the distant cannonading continued. During this time some reinforcements arrived at Fort Edward—Putnam's old chief, Sir William Johnson, with militia from Albany and a band of his friends, the Mohawk Indians. Putnam was delighted to greet his old chief. Surely, with this help, Webb would make some effort to relieve Colonel Monro.

He was soon overjoyed to hear that General

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Johnson was to start for the Lake with a reënforcement, and that he, Israel Putnam, was to accompany him, at the head of his rangers. They quickly made ready and marched out of the gate; but they had hardly gone three miles before a messenger hurried after them with word from Webb that they were to return. Hot with rage and mortification, Putnam and the others obeyed. A year later, when Putnam was a prisoner in Canada, he was told by Montcalm himself that the intended movement on the part of the English had been reported to him by an Indian scout, who said, "If you can count the leaves on the trees you can count them," and that this news seriously alarmed Montcalm and made him consider retreating.

The suspense continued for two more days. On the evening of Monday, August 8, the watchers at Fort Edward saw rockets flaming and dying against the sky, a last signal of distress from the beleaguered fort. Tuesday morning the cannonading ceased. At ten a messenger reached the fort. He said that those at Fort William Henry had split most of their cannon, and that if reënforcements did not arrive they must surrender. It was too

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late even then for help. They had already surrendered. That was what the silence of the cannon had signified.

Webb, in a panic for the safety of his own garrison, was on the verge of retreating. While he hesitated, terrible things were going on at Fort William Henry. The English, who had surrendered under promise of good treatment, were set upon by the Indians, and many of them were murdered in cold blood. Others had their clothing all torn off, their baggage stolen, and many women and children were carried away. The Canadian officers looked on without making an effort to guard those they were in honor bound to protect. Montcalm and some of the other French officers finally forced the blood-thirsty savages to stop, and sent the surviving prisoners under a strong guard to Fort Edward. Others escaped from the Indians, hid themselves in the thick woods, and were finally guided to Fort Edward by the cannon-shots those in the fort fired for that purpose. One after another they reached the fort, nearly naked, torn by briars and brambles, and half-dead from hunger and thirst. Putnam's heart swelled with rage and

## THE TRAGEDY OF FORT WILLIAM HENRY

pity at the sight of them. He was the first to reconnoiter and find that the French and Indians had abandoned Ticonderoga and were returning to Canada. With this news he calmed the fears of Webb and persuaded him not to retreat.

A few days after the tragedy Putnam visited the site of Fort William Henry. He could not bear to look at what he saw. The fort had gone. In its place there smoldered the last of a great bonfire—all that was left of the timbers of the fort and the bodies of the men, women and children who had been sacrificed to Indian rage.



VIII

TICONDEROGA





## VIII

### TICONDEROGA

**I**F Montcalm had advanced, instead of retreating to Canada after his victory at Fort William Henry, he might possibly have swept the country. Webb was all ready to abandon his forts and retreat to the Highlands of the Hudson. The colonies were in a panic, and greatly exaggerated reports of the numbers and ferocity of the French swept through them like wildfire. Luckily, the French commander did not follow up his victory; and Webb and his garrison remained undisturbed at Fort Edward.

They were not greatly cheered by the arrival, in November, of Loudon, with reënforcements, for these brought the news of the utter failure of the English attempt to take Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island; but at least their arrival meant that most of the New England men were released and could go home.

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Putnam, however, again remained on duty during this winter of 1757 to 1758. It was not long before he had another opportunity to distinguish himself. One day, while he was working on an island in the Hudson near Fort Edward, he heard shouts from the fort and saw smoke rising from the barracks. The soldiers snatched buckets, and formed in line to pass water up from the river, but, in spite of their efforts, tongues of flame began to lick the wooden walls, and Putnam saw that it would be a serious conflagration. Worst of all, the barracks directly adjoined upon the magazine where gunpowder was stored!

Putnam ran for his boat and quickly reached the mainland. He dashed up the slope, and took his stand at the head of the bucket line, on the top of a ladder, from which he poured water on the eaves. Clouds of suffocating smoke volleyed around him. He was so near the fire that his thick pair of woolen mittens was burnt from his hands. He called for another pair, dipped in water, and continued work.

“Putnam, come down,” called Colonel Haviland, the commander. “You will be burned to death!”

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“I beg you, Colonel, to let me stay,” called Putnam. “If I stop now, the magazine will surely be blown up.”

“Stay if you will,” exclaimed the Colonel, “but at least you’ll not stay alone. At it again, men! If we must be blown up, we will all go together.” The men, inspired by Putnam’s bravery, redoubled their efforts.

The timbers of the barracks began to collapse. Putnam had to descend from his ladder, but kept on pouring water on the magazine from the ground. Nearer and nearer the magazine ran the greedy spurts of flame. Now they were at the outside planks—now they had eaten through these, and only the frail thickness of the inside planks stood between them and the gunpowder.

Just at this point the bucketfuls of water passed by the soldiers to Putnam began to take effect. Slowly, slowly, the fire was beaten back. After an hour and a half of fighting the flames at close range, Putnam could leave his post. His face, hands, arms and body were blistered; when he pulled off the second pair of mittens, the skin came with them. The Commander could not hide his

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emotion as he thanked him. It was a month before Putnam recovered from his burns.

After several more months of scouting, and various adventures, Putnam left in the spring of 1758 for a brief visit to his family. When he returned to Albany in June he had been raised by the Connecticut Assembly to the rank of Provincial Major. Loudon had been recalled to England, and Abercrombie, a scarcely more competent officer, who had been put in power by political influence, had been raised to the rank of commander-in-chief of the American forces in his place. But a new light had come into the army in the person of Lord Howe, the second in rank, whom Pitt, the English war minister, hoped would have the real command.

Putnam had met Lord Howe during the previous fall, and they had become great friends. Lord Howe had gone camping with the rangers, sharing all their hardships, in order to learn the best methods of fighting and scouting in this woodland country. Now he was showing the soldiers how to fight like them. He broke all the traditions of the service by making officers and men throw away all useless baggage, cut off the heavy skirts of their

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coats, cut their hair short, instead of wearing it powdered and in a ridiculous queue, wear leggings to protect them from briars, brown the barrels of their muskets, and carry in their knapsacks enough Indian meal to last them for several weeks. He went to the brook and washed his own linen, encouraging his officers to do likewise. It must have been a hard task for some of those fat and dignified men! He invited them to a dinner where there were no seats but logs, and no rugs but bearskins, and the only dishes were bacon and boiled peas, with no implements to eat them with. When his officers hesitated, at a loss as to the proper etiquette, he pulled out a sheath containing a knife and fork from his pocket and began to cut the meat.

“Is it possible, gentlemen,” he said, looking up as if just noticing his guests’ embarrassment, “that you have come on this campaign without providing yourselves with what is necessary?” And he gave each of them a knife and fork like his own.

In spite of his strict discipline, all the officers and men adored him. A new wave of enthusiasm, at his presence, seemed to overrun the camps.

Now all were preparing for an attack on Ticon-

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deroga, the French stronghold, and so confident were the forces that they fully expected to make up for the sad defeat at Fort William Henry, gain the fortress, and drive the French from Lake Champlain. On July 5, 1758, the army of more than fifteen thousand men embarked on Lake George. It was an inspiring sight. One of the soldiers expressed the feelings of all when he wrote afterwards: "I never beheld so delightful a prospect."

Joy must have filled Putnam's heart to be a Major in that gallant army, with its glittering weapons flashing in the sun, its bright uniforms (among which the plaids and kilts of the newly arrived Highlanders were conspicuous), its martial music of bagpipe, fife and drum awaking the woodland echoes around the lake. The bateaux and whale-boats, rafts and heavy flatboats loaded with artillery were rowed with regular strokes over the sparkling waters, amid countless islands, between high and wooded banks. At five in the afternoon they encamped at Sabbath-Day camp, but they took up their journey that same night, and at sunrise the next morning passed under a high rock, called Rogers' Rock, after the famous ranger. Here,

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unknown to them, a French advance guard, under the officers Langy and Trepézac, lay among the pines at the top, and observed their progress. They thought themselves too few in number to attack the English.

The English landed, and formed in order for the march through the woods towards Ticonderoga. Rogers and a party of rangers led the way. The main army, in columns, followed. Lord Howe was at the head of the principal column, and Israel Putnam with two hundred rangers accompanied him.

The army advanced with great difficulty through the shady forest, climbing over huge fallen logs, tearing themselves on the underbrush, bewildered by the intricacy of the woodland paths. Presently even the rangers and guides in front became confused, and did not know which way to turn. The whole army was lost in the woods. So dense was the canopy of green over them that only the cawing of crows could have signified to any watchers that men were marching there.

Suddenly, when they were about two miles from the landing-place, a voice rang out of the thicket:

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“*Qui vive?*” (Who goes there?)

“*Français,*” replied the English—but the accent was faulty and did not deceive the critical ear of the challengers. They were no other than the small force of French under Langy and Treppezec who had watched the English from the top of Rogers’ Rock. They had taken a *détour*, meaning to re-join their camp at Ticonderoga and warn the French of the English approach—but they also, like the advancing army, were lost in the woods. The English were now between them and the fort, and they were compelled to fight, though their number was much smaller. They rose to the occasion bravely.

“Putnam,” said Lord Howe, “what does that firing ahead mean?”

“I don’t know, but with your Lordship’s leave I’ll go and see,” answered Putnam eagerly.

“I’ll come with you,” said Lord Howe.

Putnam disapproved. He was ready enough to risk his own life, but did not wish Lord Howe to do so.

“Lord Howe,” he argued, “if I am killed, the loss of my life will be of little consequence—but



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the preservation of yours is of infinite importance to this army.”

“Nonsense! Your life is as dear to you, Putnam, as mine is to me. I am determined to go,” answered Howe.

The blunt New England Major and the gallant young English Lord hastened to the front with a detachment. A hot skirmish with the attacking party followed. In the middle of it Lord Howe dropped dead, shot through the breast. With him died the success of the campaign.

A panic seized the troops behind, who heard the firing, but saw nothing, and imagined themselves attacked by a much larger force than was the case. Putnam and his rangers, however, kept up the fight till the main army came to its senses. When they advanced, they mistook Putnam's party for the enemy, and fired at them. A sergeant and several privates were killed, and a more serious loss was only avoided by Putnam's running through the flying balls and warning them of their mistake.

The French suffered great losses, only fifty out of their band escaping. The English number of men killed was few—but in losing Lord Howe they

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lost the soul and brains of the army. General Abercrombie went all to pieces. He kept the army under arms all night without cause, and in the morning marched them back to the landing-place. Putnam was employed immediately after the battle in caring for the wounded, a task which his kind heart made him perform as thoroughly as possible. He gave them all the food and liquid refreshment he could get, and a blanket apiece. He was especially sorry for a French officer who had been badly wounded, placed three blankets under him, and propped him up in as comfortable a position as possible by the side of a tree. The poor man could only show his gratitude by squeezing his hand.

“Ah,” said Putnam, “depend upon it, my brave soldier, you shall be brought to the camp as soon as possible, and the same care shall be taken of you as if you were my brother.”

What was his horror to learn the next day that Rogers, the ranger, who had been sent to the field to carry off the wounded, had killed every one of them who was not able to march!

Meanwhile Montcalm was strengthening his position at Ticonderoga. His men worked like mad

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all during the day, cutting down the forests around the fort to form a sort of zig-zag breastwork of felled logs, and in front of that a wide expanse covered with the trees as they fell, placed with tops out, so that the spreading branches formed an impenetrable entanglement.

It was an impossible place for infantry to attack, without the aid of cannon to shatter the log walls of the defense. Nevertheless, Abercrombie, who had heard that Montcalm expected reënforcements, hurried on his preparations, and resolved to attack without waiting to bring on his artillery wagons. Putnam and the officers were fully aware of the foolishness of the proceedings, but they remonstrated in vain. Soon after noon, July 8, the whole English army, rangers, light infantry, armed boatmen, and all, moved forward in an attempt to storm the French breastwork.

They reached the ground covered with fallen trees under a hail of bullets from the French hidden behind the breastworks. Then the scene became frightful. The men were caught on the forked branches, and could neither go forward or back. "Straining," as Parkman describes it, "for an en-

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emy they could not reach, and firing on an enemy they could not see; caught in the entanglement of fallen trees; tripped by briars, stumbling over logs, tearing through boughs; shouting, yelling, cursing, and pelted all the while with bullets that killed them by scores, stretched them on the ground, or hung them on jagged branches in strange attitudes of death," the poor soldiers paid with their lives for their commander's incompetency. Putnam as usual was in the thick of the fight, and acted as aid in bringing the provincial regiments successively to action. With that wonderful luck of his, he escaped unhurt—but the English lost in the dreadful action more than two thousand killed or wounded, and finally, after six desperate assaults, which continued all during the afternoon, were forced to retire at sunset. Major Putnam remained before the lines for an hour and a half longer, to cover with his rangers the retreat of the main body of troops, by keeping up a continuous fire from behind the stumps and bushes.

During the night the discouraged English stumbled back to their landing-place. In the morning Abercrombie gave up all attempt on Ticonderoga,

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though he still had thirteen thousand men, with whom he might have renewed the attack with artillery. Instead, he ordered all his men to embark for the foot of Lake George. They set out "in great confusion and sorrow," and in such haste that they left several hundred barrels of provisions and a large quantity of baggage in the mud of the landing-place. This time the fifes and drums were silent—there were stains of blood on the bright uniforms—and the wounded groaned on the floors of the barges. So they returned in defeat to the gloomy site of Fort William Henry.

After this retreat the New England soldiers gave Abercrombie a new name, in recognition of his old-womanish caution. They called him "Aunt Nabby-crombie"!



IX  
CAPTIVITY





## IX

### CAPTIVITY

**P**UTNAM'S thoughts were diverted from the harrowing battle of Ticonderoga by a thrilling experience he had not long after on the Hudson. He was once more employed in the ranging service. One day he was in a bateau with five men on the eastern shore, when his men on the opposite bank signaled to him that a large number of Indians were approaching in his rear, and would be upon him in an instant. Below Putnam were rapids so dangerous that no one had ever navigated them; he had no choice but to fall into the hands of the Indians, expose himself to their fire in crossing the river, or run the rapids. He decided to risk the latter. He and his boatmen pushed off, just as the Indians arrived on the shore and fired on them. The current carried them rapidly beyond gunshot, but they were now in the greatest danger from the water, which swirled and boiled around

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them, in eddies and whirlpools and treacherous rock-slides. The rapids extended for a quarter of a mile.

Putnam was at the helm. He incessantly changed the course to escape what seemed certain destruction. Twice he turned the boat almost completely around to avoid rocks, while huge waves threatened to break over, now the sides, now the stern and now the bow. His comrades and the savages both watched him in amazement from opposite banks. Sometimes the boat was on the top of the waves, sometimes it was plunging down, and then it shot through narrow passages where it seemed that only a miracle could keep it from striking the rocks which were barely submerged at each side. But at last he gained the smooth water. Then the Indians pressed their hands to their mouths in their gesture expressing amazement. They thought he was under the special protection of the Great Spirit—as perhaps he was!

But he was soon to be in worse danger. The rangers were kept especially busy during this summer of 1758, reconnoitering the woods and seeing that Montcalm's forces, which soon returned to Ticon-

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deroga, did not surprise the timid Abercrombie at his camp at Fort Edward. On July 31 Rogers, Putnam, Captain Dalzell, and seven hundred men were sent to South Bay with orders to intercept a French war-party which Abercrombie believed had been hovering about Fort Edward. When they reached South Bay they discovered that the enemy had escaped them. They therefore turned about and began the march back to Fort Edward. They passed the place where Whitehall, New York, now stands, and encamped for the night on a fork of Wood Creek about a mile from the old Fort Anne.

The next morning, Rogers, who thought the enemy was nowhere near, was foolish enough to engage in a shooting contest, firing at a target with Lieutenant Irwin for a wager. This was against all scouting principles. Putnam remonstrated, but in vain.

Four hundred and fifty French and Indians nearby, under the leadership of Marin, the famous woodsman, whom Putnam had fought against before, heard the shots, and prepared to surprise the English by hiding in the bushes near the trail they judged the English would follow.

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The English did exactly what was expected of them. They took up their march in the early evening. Their trail led past the old clearing around Fort Anne, which, having been neglected for years, was grown over with a thick underbrush, "almost impervious to anything but a wild-cat." On the narrow trail which led through this jungle the English marched unsuspectingly, single file, in the gathering dusk. Putnam headed the procession, followed by the Connecticut men, Captain Dalzell and his regulars were in the center, Rogers and his Rangers at the rear.

Putnam was just about to leave the bushes and enter the forest, when a burst of yells smote his ears, and he saw that the thickets, which a moment before had been motionless, were alive with Indians, leaping, crouching, and gliding like snakes. He snatched his gun. At that moment a tall Caughnawaga chief sprang at him, hatchet in hand. Putnam cocked his gun and snapped it at the breast of his adversary, but it missed fire. The Indian seized him and dragged him into the forest.

Meanwhile Dalzell struggled to the rescue, and Rogers, who was nearly a mile behind, heard the

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shots and tore with his rangers at top speed through the bushes. When they came up, they found the Connecticut men fighting bravely, but at great disadvantage, for the enemy were in a semi-circle around them, almost completely hidden in the bushes. The English fought desperately for two hours. At the end of that time the Canadians lost heart and many of them deserted Marin. The English finally succeeded in driving them all back into the forest. While this was going on, Putnam was having trials of his own.

His position was about as bad as it could be. The savage who had captured him had tied him to a tree, and soon, when the English pressed forward, Putnam discovered, to his horror, that he was directly between the two firing lines. The balls whistled round him—many struck the tree, and some passed through the sleeves and skirt of his coat. This lasted for more than an hour. Meanwhile a young warrior amused himself by hurling a tomahawk at Putnam's head, to see how near he could come to him without killing him. A French petty officer came up and leveled a fusee within a foot of his breast, and tried to discharge it, but it

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missed fire. He then struck Putnam in the ribs with the muzzle of his gun, and gave him a cruel blow on the jaw with the butt-end of the piece.

Finally, when the French and Indians began to retreat, Putnam's master, the chief who had captured him, came and untied him, stripped him of his coat, vest, stockings and shoes, loaded him with as many packs of the wounded as could be piled on him, then pinioned him and tied his wrists tightly together. They took up their march over the rough paths of the forest. Putnam staggered under the heavy load, which was far beyond what any one man should have carried; his feet were bleeding, and he suffered intolerable pain from the ropes cutting into his wrists. When they halted, after a march of many miles, he begged the Irish interpreter to ask the savages either to knock him in the head and take his scalp at once, or loose his hands. A French officer, hearing this, ordered his hands unbound and some of the packs taken off.

Just then Putnam's Indian master came up. He had been at the rear, in charge of the wounded. He expressed great indignation at the treatment his captive had received; but he presently went back to

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his wounded, and Putnam was left to the mercy of the other Indians, who took him on ahead to the place where the whole party was to encamp.

On the way one of them wounded him with a tomahawk on his left cheek—the scar of which he bore to his dying day. It was a taste of worse treatment to follow. When the Indians reached a place in the forest where they thought themselves safe from interference, they prepared to burn him alive.

They stripped him of his clothes, bound him to a tree, and piled dry brush in a circle around him, yelling meanwhile like so many fiends. Then they set the pile on fire. The flames disclosed a harrowing scene—the hideous painted faces, feather headdresses and dusky bodies of the savages, thrown into a lurid relief against the gloomy shadows of the forest, and in the middle their white captive, writhing and struggling in vain to break the bands that held him.

No sooner were the flames well started on the outside of the heap than a sudden shower put them all out. The Indians lighted them again with sparks from their flints. Now the twigs crackled as the

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flames ran fiercely around the circle. Putnam began to feel the scorching heat. They had tied him so that he could move his body from side to side, as the flames approached him—and as he involuntarily did so, they grinned and leaped and yelled in inhuman delight.

Thoughts of his wife and children in the peaceful Connecticut home flashed through Putnam's mind. At last he had met, in its most horrible form, the death that had dogged him so many times in his hairbreadth adventures. It was fairly upon him—and nevermore, he thought, would he enter the old gate under the apple trees, caress the children who came running joyfully at his hail, and gather his dear wife to his embrace. These thoughts were seared from his mind by the increasing heat. He commended his soul to God and prepared to die like a brave man; when, suddenly, a commotion in the crowd about him reached his dulled ears. An officer broke through the throng of savages, kicked aside the burning brands, and unbound the scorched captive. It was Marin himself, who had been informed by an Indian of the proceedings. He upbraided the savage wretches violently,



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and remained on the spot till Putnam's master arrived, to whom he delivered his charge.

The chief seemed inclined to be friendly. He offered Putnam some hard biscuit to eat, but finding he could not chew, on account of the blow in the jaw he had received from the rascally French officer, soaked some of the biscuit in water and gave him the soft part to eat. He was determined, however, that Putnam should not escape. Probably he had heard of his immunity in forest fighting thus far, and thought he needed to take special precautions. He therefore removed the moccasins from Putnam's feet, made him lie down on his back on the bare ground, stretched his arms and legs as far apart as possible and fastened them with ropes to young saplings. This method, called the "St. Andrew's Cross," had been used by the Indians to secure prisoners from time immemorial. He then laid saplings across his body; on the ends of which as many Indians as there was room for stretched themselves for the night, so that the slightest movement on the part of the captive would waken them.

Putnam lay in this painful position till morning.

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In spite of the positive agony that it caused him, in his sore and wounded condition, he could not help smiling at the thought of how ridiculous he must look.

The next morning he was given his blanket and moccasins, and allowed to march without carrying a pack. His master also gave him a little bear's meat to suck through his teeth. At night the party reached Ticonderoga. Here the captive was placed in charge of a French guard; at which precaution the Indians made faces and gestures expressive of great disgust.

Now Putnam met the famous Montcalm, and found him a small man, with quick, decided movements and a rapid, vehement way of speaking. Like Putnam, he was a lover of country life—he mourned much for the olives and mulberry trees at his home in “the pleasant land of France.” He was a devoted husband and father, too, and wrote long, tender letters to his wife and mother in between his fierce campaigns. Though he had proved careless—or not careful enough—at Ticonderoga, on other occasions he used every means in his power to restrain the barbarities of his Indian al-

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lies, "ces vilains Messieurs," "these ugly gentlemen," as he called them.

He was sorry for Putnam's sad plight, and after a short conversation with him put him in charge of a French officer who he knew would protect him. The latter did indeed treat Putnam with kindness, and took the captive with him to Montreal. How traveled that road, mostly a water-path, was in those days! By day and night, winter and summer, French, Canadians, Indians and English captives passed back and forth over the waters of Lake George and Lake Champlain, and the Richelieu River to the St. Lawrence and Montreal. It was a background to a thousand stories as thrilling as that of "Old Put's."

Among the English prisoners in Montreal at the time Putnam reached there was Colonel Peter Schuyler, a distinguished member of the distinguished Albany Schuylers, a Dutch family of patroons. His rank and wealth had obtained him numerous favors from the French, and he was comfortably lodged. He heard of Putnam's arrival and immediately obtained leave to visit him in the prisoners' quarters. What he saw shocked him.

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A forlorn, gaunt captive, with a swollen, gashed, and dirty face, the scantiest allowance of dirty, ragged clothes, his bare legs and feet bleeding from thorns and briars, his beard long and squalid, came out to him—this was a change indeed from the prosperous and comfortable New England officer.

“Can this be Major Putnam?” exclaimed Schuyler. He looked closer and recognized the honest blue eyes of his old acquaintance, who summoned up a grin of welcome, ghastly enough on his swollen face, but showing that the old, indomitable Putnam was still there.

“None other,” replied he hoarsely. “And mighty glad to see you, Colonel—though I’m not just in shape to receive a call—and what’s more, have neither meat nor drink to offer you.”

“The villains—to put you in such a plight,” exclaimed Schuyler, careful, however, to speak in a low tone, lest he should endanger Putnam’s chances still more with his captors. “Never fear, though, Major—I’ll soon get you out of this.” He left after a short conversation, and hurried to quarters where he had influence. Before long Putnam was moved to Schuyler’s own house and supplied with

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decent clothing and food. The generous Major also lent him money for his needs.

That summer a victory for the English—the taking of Fort Frontenac, at the site of Kingston on the St. Lawrence, by General Bradstreet and his armed boatmen—brought about an exchange of prisoners in Montreal. Schuyler was included in the exchange—not so Putnam. But Schuyler was determined to effect his release. He knew that if the French realized that Putnam was the partisan leader who had fought them so efficiently, they would not let him go—he therefore decided to try a ruse. He prevailed upon the Governor of Canada to offer that whatever officer Schuyler named should be included in the exchange list. He then remarked, with apparent indifference.

“There is an old man here, who is a Provincial Major, and wishes to be at home with his wife and children; he can do no good here or anywhere else; I believe your Excellency had better keep some of the young men, who have no wife or children to care for, and let the old fellow go.” This diplomacy had the desired effect—and the “old man,” who was just forty, was at once released.

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On the journey home, Putnam was given an opportunity for kindness which delighted him—for rough woodsman as he was, blunter in his speech and manners even than the majority of blunt New Englanders, he still possessed that real chivalry which springs from an honest and gentle heart. Knowing these qualities of his, Colonel Schuyler entrusted to his care during the journey a widow, by the name of Mrs. Howe, still beautiful and charming in spite of the many sorrows she had experienced.

Her first husband had been killed by the Indians—her second also. She and her seven children had been taken captive by them in Hinsdale, New Hampshire, and led through the forests to Canada. There she managed to get her two eldest daughters into a convent in order to prevent their being married to Indian braves. Her other five children were taken from her and scattered among different tribes. She herself was ransomed for the sum of  $\text{£}11$ , four hundred livres (about eighty dollars) by an elderly French officer, living at Fort Jean, who took her to live with his family.

The officer's son, also an officer, fell in love with

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her. She did not return his affection, but could not get rid of him. Schuyler, hearing of it, came to the rescue, and offered to buy her from the elder officer, that being the only way he could obtain her release. The latter, thinking to turn a dishonest penny, would not part with her for less than one thousand livres. Schuyler persuaded the Governor to interfere and reduce the ransom to four hundred livres, the original amount. He also saw that every one of her five sons were rescued from the Indians and returned to her, and provided that she return to New England under Putnam's escort.

When the party set out, Mrs. Howe's admirer, the young officer, joined them, and began again his unwelcome lovmaking. Mrs. Howe told Putnam, and Putnam informed the insolent young fellow he had better keep off; he had him to reckon with now when annoying her. Upon this, the bully beat a retreat.

Major Putnam was exceedingly busy during this trip. He not only had to help the mother—he took charge of her five little boys, carrying them over swamps and brooks, helping them up steep places, even cooking and cutting up the food for the littlest

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ones. He was fairly experienced in such work, with all his own youngsters at home. They reached New England safely, Mrs. Howe finding shelter with her friends. Some years after, when the war was over, she went back to Canada to get her daughters from the convent. One of them had become so fond of convent life that she hated to leave, but finally both rejoined their mother.

And what of Putnam's home-coming? Words fail me when I attempt to describe it. You can imagine it for yourself—Hannah's beaming face, and the glad cries of the children as they rushed to meet him. Then, after they had held their breaths and laughed and cried at the story of his trials, what a meal he must have sat down to. Fresh-killed chickens, ham and bacon, delicious vegetables from Hannah's garden, cooked with cream given by his sleek cows—with the favorite New England delicacies, pies of pumpkin and pies of apple and quince. Doughnuts, also, and gingerbread—just the meal to give anyone but a New Englander a bilious attack, but we may imagine Putnam was equal to it. Then, as the early fall evening closed in, the logs were lighted in the big fireplace, and neighbors dropped



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in by twos and threes to drink hot mulled cider and exclaim as the hero of the hour told his tales anew. But there was one deep shade on this splendid home-coming—one place that was vacant at table and in the circle around the hearth. On the very day that Putnam had so narrowly escaped being burnt to death by the Indians, his second son, Daniel, a boy of 17, had passed away—history does not say from what cause. Hannah had had to bear this sorrow without her husband to comfort her. Truly, the trials of war are not all with those who go to war. The women who stay behind have their full share.



X

CANADA CONQUERED .



## X

### CANADA CONQUERED

**I**N following Putnam's trials during the summer of 1758, we have overlooked the fact that the English campaign as a whole had taken a decided turn for the better. Early in the summer the almost impregnable fortress of Louisbourg had at last fallen before the gallant assault of the English soldiers and sailors under Sir Jeffrey Amherst, helped by the officer Colonel James Wolfe, afterwards the hero of Quebec. In July of the same summer, Lieutenant-Colonel Bradstreet had taken Fort Frontenac on Lake Ontario; and in November General Forbes and his army had taken Fort Duquesne, now Pittsburg, "the Gateway of the West."

These successes had followed the accession of Pitt, the great War Minister, to the command of military affairs in England. He put an end to all bungling, appointed the right men to the right places, and animated the whole army with courage

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and confidence. The well-planned campaigns of 1759 were undertaken with alacrity by regulars and provincials alike. Their main features were the attack on Quebec by Wolfe, now a general, a new attempt to capture Ticonderoga and Crown Point by Amherst, and the advance into Canada by Amherst by way of Ticonderoga, Crown Point and the St. Lawrence.

Putnam in the spring of 1759 received his appointment as lieutenant-colonel in the Fourth Regiment, commanded by Colonel Fitch. Undaunted by his previous experiences, he set out again in May, 1759, on the well-traveled road to Albany.

Again came the familiar life at the encampment on Lake George. This time there were about eleven thousand men, half regulars and half provincials. They busied themselves for more than a month in drilling, firing at targets, scouting, etc., and in such amusements as bathing, fishing and cutting spruce tops to make spruce beer, which was in much demand as a remedy for scurvy. The authorities ordered that the soldiers should be provided with as much as they liked of this "soft drink" at a half-penny a quart.

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The army embarked for Ticonderoga on the twenty-first of July, a little over a year from the last disastrous attempt. Again countless oars flashed in the sunlight, and the drums beat, as bateaux and barges filled with countless men in uniform with glittering weapons advanced along the picturesque lake. But this time the promise of the beginning was more than justified. Ticonderoga was abandoned by the French almost without a struggle. When the English reached the intrenchment at the foot of which they had suffered such a terrible defeat the year before, the French made no attempt to defend it, but took refuge inside the fort. They fired from there, but the English found shelter from the balls under the walls of the intrenchment.

Amherst now brought up his artillery to invest the fort. Putnam was in command of this work, and must have favorably contrasted Amherst's unflurried preparations with Abercrombie's stupid haste in the last campaign. Amherst, to paraphrase General Grant's saying, would have sat down before the entrenchments and fought it out with his artillery if it had taken all summer—but there was

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no need for such action. Bourslamaque, the French commander, received orders from Vaudreuil, the Governor of Canada, to retreat down Lake Champlain at the approach of the English. He accordingly did so, leaving only four hundred soldiers in the fort, who escaped by night on the lake side in boats as the English encamped in front of it. As the last one stole away, Putnam and the other watchers saw a great glare in the night sky, followed by a terrific explosion, as fragments of the fort were hurled up into the air. The French had left a fire burning in the magazine. But only one bastion blew up, and against the lurid sky the French flag was seen still waving on the ramparts. An English sergeant of light infantry went up and took it off at the risk of his life. So the last sign of the Bourbons passed from the fort in the forest which had terrorized the English for so long, and in its place was set the red cross of St. George. No one dreamed how soon it too would pass, and the Stars and Stripes of a nation still unborn succeed it.

Amherst set his men to repairing the works and prepared to attack Crown Point, but was soon in-



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formed by his scouts that that also was abandoned. There was nothing now to prevent his going to the help of Wolfe by taking his army to Oswego and by boat down the Lake and the St. Lawrence to Montreal. Wolfe, his friend and brother-in-arms, racking his brain with plans to capture the formidable fortress of Quebec, sorely needed his aid—but Amherst was of a deliberate disposition, and concluded he had done enough active campaigning for one year. He set his soldiers to building a new fort at Crown Point. Putnam was busy during the rest of the summer and autumn superintending this work. Meanwhile the good news reached them of the surrender of Fort Niagara, on July 24, 1759, to Sir William Johnson, who had succeeded General Prideaux, killed in action. Putnam must have heard with a certain grim satisfaction that the French in the fort had been wild with terror of Johnson's Mohawks, fearing he would take revenge through them for the slaughter of defenseless English prisoners at Fort William Henry. He might have thought that turn about was fair play, up to a certain point, in order that the French might realize what the English had suffered—but he antici-

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pated, of course, Johnson's action—the same that he would have performed in his place. Johnson so restrained his fierce Mohawks that they did not inflict the least injury upon the prisoners.

During the fall a still more welcome piece of news reached Putnam and the others at Crown Point—this was the announcement of Wolfe's great victory—how he had led a force during the night of September 12 up the steep bank which led to the Heights of Abraham above Quebec, how they had surprised the French, the battle that ensued, and the capture of Quebec. England and the colonies were wild with joy at the news, but a great sorrow dimmed their rejoicings—Wolfe had been killed at the moment of victory, murmuring, as he heard of the French retreat, "Now, God be praised, I can die in peace." Montcalm also received his death-blow in the battle, and was nevermore to return to his beloved home in France. With him died the hope of New France, for he was the one man of military genius in the country, and the only one who stood out against the political incompetency and corruption that was choking the life from the unfortunate colony.

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Of all the French possessions there now remained only the narrow strip on the St. Lawrence between Jacques-Cartier on the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and Kingston, on Lake Ontario. Amherst put off taking this until the next year. The army at Crown Point disbanded. Putnam went home, where his family were more than consoled for his lack of thrilling tales to tell them by his safety and the great results of the bloodless campaign. That winter another son came to the Putnam household, and was called Daniel, in memory of the Daniel who had died during the preceding winter.

Next spring (1760) Amherst resolved to send expeditions into Canada by three ways at once. Gen. Murray was to ascend the St. Lawrence from Quebec, Brigadier Haviland to enter Canada by the Lake Champlain route, and Amherst himself was to lead an army down the St. Lawrence to Montreal. Putnam was ready as usual to take part in the campaign, and was in charge of a part of the Connecticut troops in Amherst's force. For the fifth successive time he went to Albany in May; from there the forces crossed to Schenectady, then up the Mohawk River to Fort Stanwix on the Great

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Carrying Place, then across Oneida Lake and down the Onondaga River to Oswego. By the tenth of August the whole force was afloat on Lake Ontario. They progressed in three divisions, the first under Colonel Haldimand, the second under General Amherst, the third under Brigadier-General Thomas Gage. Putnam was in the latter division, and became a great friend of Gage's, little knowing that within a few years he would be fighting against him.

The fleet crossed the lake safely, and soon found themselves among the beautiful Thousand Islands. By the fifteenth of August they reached a place on the southwest bank of the river, at the head of the rapids, called La Presentation, or Oswegatchie, where Father Piquet, a French priest who had often urged his Iroquois converts on to murder the English, had formerly held his mission. Outside Oswegatchie (now Ogdensburg, New York) hovered two French armed brigs, which threatened Amherst's bateaux and whaleboats. The flatboats carrying his artillery had been delayed in the winding channels of the Islands. In this emergency Putnam came to the fore, according to a story printed in

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Almon's "Impartial Remembrancer," an English volume printed in 1775:

"While he (Amherst) was pondering what should be done, Putnam comes to him and says, 'General, that ship must be taken.' 'Aye,' says Amherst, 'I would give the world she was taken.' 'I'll take her,' says Putnam. Amherst smiled and asked how. 'Give me some wedges, a beetle (a large wood hammer or maul, used for driving wedges), and a few men of my own choice.' Amherst could not conceive how an armed vessel was to be taken by four or five men, a beetle, and wedges. However, he granted Putnam's request. When night came, Putnam, with his materials and men, went in a boat under the vessel's stern and in an instant drove in the wedges behind the rudder in the little cavity between the rudder and ship and left her. In the morning the sails were seen fluttering about; she was adrift . . . and being presently blown ashore was easily taken."

Humphreys, Putnam's first biographer, says that Putnam planned to do this, but was prevented from carrying out his plan, as one of the ships immediately surrendered, and the other was run aground by

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the French. However this may be, we may give the New Englander credit for true Yankee ingenuity and resourcefulness in his scheme.

Just below Oswegatchie was a French fort built on an island, and called Fort Lévis. It was defended by a breastwork of heavy logs, which projected over the water. Putnam proposed a novel plan for its siege. This was to send down a number of boats surrounded by fascines, or bundles of sticks which should conceal the men completely, each boat to be provided with a long plank, fitted to the bow so that it could be raised or lowered at will. When the boats approached the breastwork, they were to lower the planks, in order to form a gangplank to the top of the works, so that the men could easily pass over. Whether this was actually done or not remains in some doubt. At any rate, the fort surrendered!

After the surrender, the French were in terror of Johnson's Indians, who most heartily wished to kill the prisoners. Being restrained in this natural impulse, three quarters of their number went home in a rage.

Just below the island on which Fort Levis stood,

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begin the rapids of the St. Lawrence. The fleet began the dangerous descent, passed the first rapids, the Galops, the Rapide Plat, the Long Saut, and the Coteau du Lac in safety; but when they reached the second stretch of rapids, which tossed their white crests and roared as if they longed to engulf the whole of Abercrombie's army, they paid a heavy reckoning. Forty-six boats were totally wrecked, eighteen damaged, and eighty-four men lost their lives. At last they reached the calm waters of Lake St. Louis, a widening of the river above Montreal, landed at La Chine, nine miles above the city, and presently marched on and encamped before the walls of the city itself.

On the same day, General Murray, who had come up from Quebec, arrived at Isle St. Therese, just below Montreal, and Brigadier-General Haviland arrived from the Lake Champlain region. Montreal, whose defenses were useful only against Indians, could not hold her own against the triple army of the English. On September 8, 1760, the city of convents and churches, priests and nuns, French noblesse and fur-traders—this city which was founded through a dream, settled by saints,

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and inhabited by sinners, which had a history of romance and terror second to no city on the continent—became the possession of the alien race. At the same time all the other French troops in Canada laid down their arms. When the capitulation was signed, “half the continent changed hands at the scratch of a pen.” Canada and all its dependencies passed to the British crown.

What a day that was for the New England provincials who had fought so bravely! The long campaigning years were ended, and from Maine to Niagara the border settlers were safe forever from the midnight alarms of the murderous enemy. Of the much greater results the English conquest of Canada was to have for them they were still happily ignorant. They hardly realized to what an extent the presence of the French on the continent had rendered them dependent on the mother-country, or how the withdrawal of the enemy would cause them to grow in independence of spirit. But they had learned their lessons of courage and cooperation on the great forest battlefields of this war, and they were to put them in practice again in a way that they little dreamed.



XI

THE SIEGE OF HAVANA



## XI

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**O**UTSIDE Montreal was an Indian mission called Caughnawaga, from the name of the tribe who lived there. Putnam, visiting this mission one day at the time of Montreal's surrender, was delighted to find an old friend, or so he regarded him—none other than the big Caughnawaga chief who had taken him captive near Ticonderoga. The chief lived in a well-built stone house, and was as glad to see Putnam as Putnam was to see him. They shook hands, smoked a pipe of peace together, and Putnam promised to protect the Indian now that he had come under the power of the English. Remembering the hospitality the chief had shown Putnam in stripping him of most of his clothes, tying him to a tree in the thick of the battle, and binding him down in a St. Andrew's cross all night, this certainly showed a magnanimous spirit on the part of our hero. But Putnam

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was a true soldier, and understood the conditions of warfare too well to harbor resentment at a little rough treatment. "The Caughnawagas are the bravest of Indians," he was accustomed to declare, and wished to make them our allies at the time of the Revolution.

Within a week after the capitulation, Putnam, with the rest of the Connecticut men, was on his way back to Lake Champlain, where they worked on Fort William Augustus till the last of October, when he returned to his home.

He must have been almost ready to settle down, but the next year, 1761, Amherst called the forces out again in a campaign for the purpose of reducing "the enemy to the necessity of accepting a peace, on terms of Glory and advantage to his Majesty's Crown, and beneficial, in particular, to his subjects in America." Putnam was lieutenant-colonel of the Second Connecticut Regiment. This year there was no fighting and he was employed in superintending the rebuilding and strengthening of the forts at Ticonderoga and Crown Point.

But though Canada was conquered, England was not yet at peace. An arrangement called the "Fam-

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ily Compact" had been made between the Bourbon rulers of France and Spain (Charles III of Spain and Louis XV of France), which threatened the interests of England. She accordingly declared war on Spain, on the 4th of January, 1762. The capture of the West Indian Islands belonging to Spain was the first thing on her program. During February of that year Martinique was captured by the British; and in the early spring the Earl of Albemarle and Admiral Sir John Pococke sailed to capture Havana.

Meanwhile the British government had called upon the colonies to furnish troops, and Connecticut had voted to furnish twenty-three hundred men. Lyman, always the leader of the Connecticut forces in this period, was again in command, and second to him was Putnam, now lieutenant-colonel of the First Regiment.

Putnam, though he must have had some gray hairs by now, was something of a boy still in his zest for adventure. To exchange the snows and biting blasts of Canada, and the hard woodland life of Ticonderoga, for the soft airs, the palms and coconut trees, and the sandy beaches of Cuba appealed

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to him. But, aside from that, he was ready to go, as always, where his country needed him. It must have been a relief, though, that instead of assembling at the little frontier village of Albany, as they had in so many wearisome years gone by, the forces met at New York, then as now a city of great attractions, though there were no skyscrapers to gaze at, no great crowds or bustle. Perhaps at the time Putnam paid it this visit there was a play going on in the theater, built in 1753, when "play-acting" in Boston was still severely punished by the Puritan authorities. He may have seen "The Beaux' Stratagem," perhaps, or "The Beggar's Opera," or "Richard the Third." And if he did, it was probably the first play he ever saw in all his life. But there was not much time for him to divert himself in the city, for he was now acting Colonel of the Connecticut regiment, General Lyman being in command of the brigade, and there were many things to be attended to before the sailing of the army. The transports finally got off in June.

The first part of their voyage was uneventful; but as the fleet approached the coast of Cuba, it encountered a terrific storm, and the transport which

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carried Putnam and five hundred of his men was driven upon the rocks and wrecked.

Putnam kept his head in the midst of the fury of the tempest, the pounding of the ship on the rocks and the noise of the waves, and shouted directions to his soldiers. He kept strict order, and set those who understood tools to making rafts out of spars, planks, etc. They launched one of these, and by the aid of long cables of rope they had on board, stretched a line from the ship to the shore, which was of great help in getting the other rafts to land. All the men reached the shore safely. Putnam had them make a camp and fortify it in order that they might not be taken by surprise if inhabitants of this or neighboring islands attacked them. No such attack occurred, and after their being in camp two or three days the storm subsided, and the rest of the fleet, which had ridden out the storm with great difficulty, sent a convoy to shore to take them away. The journey was resumed, and they were shortly in sight of the deep, narrow entrance of Havana Harbor, and the gray outlines of Morro Castle on the left.

The English soldiers, eleven thousand in number,

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under the Earl of Albemarle, had been toiling here for nearly two months, digging trenches in the dry earth, at the foot of the castle, under the pitiless midsummer sun of the Tropics. The earth was so scarce they hardly had enough to keep the fascines in place, and the siege works were only a mass of dry fagots. When the grand battery opened upon the Spanish defenses, the battery itself took fire, burned up and had to be built all over again. The soldiers fell sick; fresh water was scarce, and many died from thirst, others from fevers. It was a dismal scene that the New England soldiers entered upon, but their fresh strength and contagious good spirits seemed to reanimate the whole army.

With the help of the provincial reënforcements, Lord Albemarle determined to attempt to carry Morro Castle, the key to Havana, as it was called, by storm. The work of sapping, that is, undermining by tunnels, had resulted in a breach of the right bastion of the fort, on the thirtieth of July. On the afternoon of that day, the English storming-party mounted the breach, overtook the defenders by surprise, and dispersed them. The Commandant of the fort, Don Luis de Velasco, a very brave Span-



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iard, refused to fly, and was mortally wounded in the fight. So honorable was his conduct that the Spanish authorities ordered that ever after there should be a ship in the Spanish navy named *Velasco*. In the work of storming the fortress, the Spaniards lost about five hundred men, while the English lost only two officers and thirty men. "There is," says William Farrand Livingston, one of Putnam's biographers, "no detailed record of Putnam's part in the victorious action, but he was a sharer in the honors bestowed upon the members of the storming party for their gallant service."

The next object of Lord Albemarle was the fall of Havana. Works were begun upon both sides of the city, and carried on for ten days. On the morning of August 11, the English batteries opened fire; the bombardment continued till two in the afternoon, when the Spanish offered to surrender. Two days later the negotiations ended and Havana and its immediate territory was in the hands of the English. It was the second great city Putnam had seen pass to the English arms within a year, and he joined in the triumph as the olive-skinned Spaniards, nearly a thousand regular troops,

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marched out of the city with all the honors of war. When he entered, with the English, he gazed about him with delight at the picturesque, balconied houses which the shells had spared, covered with plaster, white or tinted in vivid, yet soft, blues and greens and rose and lavenders and yellows, at the courtyards guarded by handsome wrought-iron gates, at the graceful palm trees and pleasant parks, or plazas, where the military band was wont to play every afternoon, and those of the Spanish aristocracy who had not left the city drove or strolled. There must have been much for the New Englanders to see in the quaint Spanish town; but the sight-seeing was not done under as pleasant conditions as it would be now, for the Northerners had not learned how to guard their health in the Tropics, and the New England troops, as well as the English, caught more fevers, till the camps were full of sick and dying men. Putnam had such a strong constitution that nothing seemed to affect him. One day he and Lieutenant Parks went out in the country near Havana to buy provisions for the troops, exposing themselves in the process to the noonday sun, which is very dangerous in

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the Tropics. By the time they returned, the Lieutenant was ill, and a few days later he died, but Putnam felt no bad effects.

One day, while Putnam was strolling along the streets of Havana, he came upon a Spaniard beating a negro slave unmercifully with his bamboo cane. You remember Putnam's first adventure with a negro slave—his kind heart had not changed a particle since then. Although he was unarmed and alone, he walked up to the Spaniard and wrested the cane from his hands. A mob of Cubans gathered, and threatened to give Putnam a beating. He ducked through them and ran for his life to the wharf, where an English ship lay. When he reached there he found that the negro had followed and absolutely refused to leave him. Putnam took him home with him when he left, and found "Dick," as he was called, the most faithful of servants. When Putnam died, he left Dick the bamboo cane, and the old negro hobbled around on it proudly all the rest of his life.

The days dragged on. Soon it was fall, and the men, reduced in numbers and depressed in spirits by constant deaths, longed for home. At

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last, in October, the welcome order came to embark. The Connecticut soldiers could hardly wait to get on the ships, eager as they were to "reach their native Shores and with wraptured hearts overcome with Joy, to Salute, embrace, and fall into the Arms of their long wished for, wishing, lovely, loving friends," as a Chaplain, whose pen fairly stutered with excitement, wrote in his diary. Their longing had been increased by a ship that came to Havana in October, and brought them news of a prosperous season and good harvests in New England. I imagine they would have exchanged all the tropical delicacies in the world for one ear of corn from a New England garden when they heard that. At last the transports sailed out of Havana harbor—and Putnam had one more narrow escape, as his ship struck a rock, but it was finally carried off by the wind. It was a rough passage, and many were seasick, and many of the fever sufferers died. But they reached New York finally, and there scattered for home.

The capture of Havana had produced a sensation in the American colonies, and Putnam, with others who had taken part in it, was received with

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great honors upon his return. What was their surprise to learn, a few months after, that this great fortress and commanding point in the West Indies they had helped gain was to be given back to Spain in return for the comparatively unimportant region of Florida. In July, 1763, Havana was returned to Spain and the English soldiers walked out of the city. That surrender had more important consequences than were seen at the time. If the Americans had not been able to use Havana as a port during the Revolution, the struggle with England would have been considerably harder than it was, and might have ended very differently.



XII

PONTIAC'S REBELLION





## XII

### PONTIAC'S REBELLION

**I**F this were a "made-up" story of adventure, I should really be ashamed to have the hero go through so many excitements in such different parts of the country in such a short period of time; I should feel as if it were taxing the imagination of the reader too much. But as this story of Putnam's life is absolutely true, I shall have to tell just what happened, and leave the reader to judge whether life in the good old days before automobiles and flying-machines was quite as peaceful as we usually imagine.

Putnam had hardly returned from his Cuban trip before he was sent in an entirely different direction to help quell a great Indian uprising—the greatest that had ever taken place in North America since the white man came there.

"This Assembly doth appoint Israel Putnam, Esq., to be Major of the forces now ordered to

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be raised in this colony for his Majesty's service against the Indian nations who have been guilty of perfidious and cruel massacres of the English." So read Putnam's commission from the Connecticut Assembly in the spring of 1764. The Indians of the Great Lakes and Ohio Valley had been disgusted at the outcome of the French and Indian War. They hated and distrusted the English—and no wonder; for, while the French officers feasted and flattered them, and gave them many presents, and the French traders lived in their village with them on almost equal terms, and took Indian women for wives, the English pursued an entirely different policy. They were rude and contemptuous in their manners, refused to give them presents, made fun of their wampum belts and other sacred emblems, would not have the savages about their camps, and cheated them right and left in trade. Besides all this, the Indians realized that, while the French came to their country mainly to get furs, the English meant to settle, and eventually drive them out of their lands.

Greatest among all Indians at that time—and, indeed, one of the greatest of Indians at any time

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—was an Ottawa chief called Pontiac, who lived in the western Great Lake region. He conceived the plan of uniting all the Indian tribes between the Allegheny Mountains and the Mississippi River in a systematic effort to drive out the English from that region. In the autumn of 1762 he sent his messengers far and wide, with many wampum belts, and tomahawks stained red in token of war, pledging all the tribes to action in the following spring. His plan was for a great simultaneous attack on the English forts along the Great Lakes. The Indians in the neighborhood of these forts were to gain admission to them under various pretexts—and once in they were to massacre all the inhabitants.

These plans were carried out only too well. Mackinac, Presqu'isle (Erie), Sandusky and all the other isolated posts but one on the Great Lakes fell before the Indians' attacks in May, 1763. Detroit alone held out. Major Gladwyn, the commander (with whom Putnam had fought at Crown Point), received word through an Indian girl of the intended attack in time to prepare for it. He closed the gates of the fortified town at Detroit,

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and for months he and his soldiers withstood a siege carried on by the Indians under the direction of Pontiac himself. It was the only example of such a siege in all Indian history.

When the siege first began, in May, 1763, Amherst had been the commander-in-chief in America. He had a very poor opinion of Indians, so much so that he thought their attacks hardly worth bothering about! So he left those at Detroit to defend themselves as best they might. In 1764 General Thomas Gage (whose acquaintance Putnam had made during the Montreal campaign) succeeded Amherst; and he resolved to send two expeditions into the Indian country; one, under Colonel Bouquet, to advance west from Port Pitt (Pittsburg) to subdue the Delawares and Shawanoes of that region, and the other, under Bradstreet, down the Great Lakes to relieve Detroit. The latter was the expedition which Putnam joined.

Putnam went to Albany, where Bradstreet's army was collecting. The forces went up the Mohawk River, crossed Oneida Lake, descended the Onondaga, and, reaching Oswego, embarked on Lake On-

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tario. After a few days' journey on the Lake they reached Niagara. Here were the bark wigwams of a great number of friendly Indians, who had been persuaded to come by the influence of Sir William Johnson. Among them Putnam's Caughnawaga chief turned up again. After making a treaty of friendship with the English, many of the Indians wandered away to their western hunting grounds; but the Caughnawaga, at the head of a hundred of his tribe, accompanied the army westward, and won special praise for good behavior.

The English army after a while reached a point on the Lake between the present cities of Buffalo and Erie, where they found more Indians waiting to speak with them. These were Delawares and Shawanoes from the Ohio Valley. They had come to make a treaty, they said; but they only had one wampum belt.

"Don't trust them, General," Putnam warned Bradstreet. "Indians who are sent by their tribes to make treaties always have much wampum, a belt for every clause of the treaty. These fellows are deceiving us. Like as not, they want to detain us while their friends massacre more English

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settlers west and south of us." Bradstreet thought he knew more about Indians than anyone else, and paid no attention to Putnam's advice, which the other officers who were familiar with Indians seconded. He found out his mistake later on, when the treaty which he made with them was not kept, and the unfortunate officers he dispatched to their villages were illtreated and nearly killed. The same thing happened at Sandusky, where Bradstreet had been ordered to punish the Indians for their horrible massacre of the Sandusky garrison, but made a treaty instead. All this took much time, and it was the twenty-sixth of August before the American forces came in sight of the stockaded town of Detroit.

Along the banks of the river were Indian villages, but not an Englishman was in sight. They were huddled inside the stockade, as they had been almost continuously for fifteen long and dreary months. During most of that time a soldier could not lift his cap above the ramparts without having it shot away by some savage skulking in the grass outside. They had suffered from scarcity of food and of clothing—they had heard of nothing but

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massacres of the other garrisons along the Lakes. Worse still, they were in continual terror for fear the Indians would set the town on fire with their burning arrows, or cut and burn their way through the wooden palisades. Luckily, such an assault was against all the Indian ideas of warfare, and did not occur.

When those in the fort saw the fleet approaching, their excitement was intense. For the first time the gaunt and ragged soldiers dared to crowd upon the ramparts. They cheered, they waved, and the cannon in the blockhouse roared a welcome. Hostile Indians scuttled away, and friendly ones, who had sent ambassadors to Niagara, flocked to the shores in welcome.

Bradstreet's army landed and poured into the fort. It was an invasion at last, but a friendly one. Comrades who had served together in the last war greeted each other. Putnam lost no time in shaking hands with the gallant commander, Major Gladwyn, with whom he had served at Ticonderoga and Crown Point. He heard with regret that Dalzell, who was with Putnam's party when he was captured by the Indians, had led a sortie

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from the fort and been killed by the Indians while trying to lift a wounded soldier to a place of safety.

But now all sorrows were forgotten in relief at the end of the long siege. Fresh men from Bradstreet's forces took the place of the troops who had watched so long. Pontiac, the main spirit of the attacking Indians, was away in the Maumee region, and his followers, convinced now that the English were too strong for them, begged for peace. They promised to call themselves the "children" of the King of England. They meant it merely as a graceful compliment, but Bradstreet thought they had promised to be subjects, and would obey the English King henceforth and never fight against him. He did not understand the Indian nature, as was shown most plainly by his hacking to pieces with his sword a belt of wampum the Indians offered to clinch the treaty. He could hardly have insulted them worse if he had killed one of their number. However, the Indians passed over the insult in silence.

Presently the army took up its way homeward. They stopped at Sandusky nearly a month, during



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which time Putnam, at the head of the provincials, superintended the rebuilding of the fort. He was much impressed by the fertile, level country, where, as he wrote to a friend at home, "there are ten or twenty thousand acres of land in a place that have not a bush or twig on them, but all covered with grass so big and high that it is very difficult to travel—and all as good plow-land as ever you saw; any of it fit for hemp; but there are too many hemp birds among it, which will make it very unhealthy to live among. Detroit is a very beautiful place, and the country around it."

He was less impressed with the conduct of the Indians, supposedly now friends and allies of the English. "The Six Nations are all angry," he writes, "and this day they are all packing up to go off; and what will be the event I don't know nor care, for I have no faith in an Indian peace patched up by presents."

However, the Indians offered no serious trouble. The chief difficulty the army encountered on the way home was the weather. Soon after leaving Sandusky, Bradstreet insisted upon the fleet's encamping on an open beach, exposed to the wind,

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though there was a river near which would have held them in safety. During the night a storm arose, which dashed half their boats to pieces, and caused the destruction of much food and other supplies. When the storm subsided and they were ready to go on, there were not enough boats left to hold them. Some had to travel by land; while those on the vessels, of whom Putnam was one, were crowded so that they suffered greatly. There was not enough food, and they were almost starved by the time they reached Fort Niagara, where fresh oxen were killed for them. When they left Niagara and set sail on Lake Ontario, they met with a "perfect Tempest with a snow drift, the wind being chiefly N.W. and extremely cold."

Putnam, with his usual hardihood, was one of those the least affected by the trip, and upon reaching Oswego, where many stayed to recover, marched on to the Hudson. There the regulars went into winter quarters and the provincials disbanded. Putnam, needless to say, went home.

The war-chief, Pontiac, though he continued to make trouble for a year or more afterward, finally bowed to the inevitable and made his peace with

## PONTIAC'S REBELLION

the English. Putnam hung his flintlock and his carved powder-horn up to take a well-deserved rest. It was almost ten years before they were needed again.



XIII

A HERO AT HOME



### XIII

#### A HERO AT HOME

ONE of the surest signs of being a hero is receiving a nickname from the people. When Israel Putnam came home from the French and Indian Wars he was no longer Israel Putnam—he was “Old Put” on the lips of all New England. There was probably no man in his part of the world better known or more admired than he. The stories returned soldiers told of “Old Put’s” dashing deeds and narrow escapes were favorite ones at the home fireside; and Putnam’s democratic principles and manners and his kind heart won him an affection which mere courage might not have gained. I dare say the common people liked him all the better because he had little book-learning and culture; he was one of themselves, a man who had risen in the world by his own spirit and courage and hard work; and so they took him to their hearts and made much of him.

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“Old Put” was not too much of a hero to settle down to farming and a quiet life again. He took up the plow with as much zest as if he had never seen a gun, and made many improvements on his farm. He enjoyed being at home and with his family, but, alas, two great sorrows were in store for him. The first was the death of his eldest daughter, Elizabeth, aged seventeen, in January, 1765; the second, but a few months later, the death of his dear wife, Hannah, his brave and steadfast helpmate during so many years. The youngest baby of all, named Peter Schuyler, after his father’s benefactor at Montreal, was only a few months old.

Soon after his wife’s death, Putnam showed his increased attention to serious things by becoming a full member of the Congregational Church in his neighborhood.

These were the years when the Colonies were beginning to seethe with excitement over the passing of the detested Stamp Act. You may be sure that “Old Put,” in spite of having been so long in his Majesty’s service, and having so many friends among the English officers, was among the first to resent British injustice to the rights of a liberty-



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loving people. He had joined the patriotic society, "The Sons of Liberty" before the passing of the Stamp Act. The day he heard the Act was actually passed, he got his horse, saddled it, and set out to ride from one town to another over the eastern part of Connecticut to find out how many men could be counted upon to offer armed resistance to the Act.

The British officers in New York heard of his activities and were much incensed. Ten thousand men, they heard, in Connecticut alone were ready to resist the Stamp Act under the command of Colonel Putnam.

Putnam sent messages to the Sons of Liberty in Massachusetts, New York and other colonies that he "would assist them with the Militia to the utmost lives and fortunes to prevent the Stamp Act being enforced."

Unfortunately, an accident prevented his being present when the Connecticut men met Jared Ingersoll, the appointed Stamp Officer, near Hartford, Connecticut, on his way to fulfill the duties of his office, and made him mount a table, deliver a speech resigning his office, and shout three times, "Liberty

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and Property!" Putnam would have laughed in spite of himself when the Stamp Officer remarked ruefully, as he rode along on his white horse before that great crowd of incensed patriots, "This reminds me of that passage in the Book of Revelation which describes, 'Death on a pale horse and hell following him.'"

The feeling against the stamps was so strong in Connecticut that the agents did not dare send the stamps there. They had heard of the conversation Putnam had had with Governor Fitch a little later. Putnam and two other men had been delegated to call on the Governor and gently but firmly acquaint him with their views. The Governor asked, "What shall I do if the stamped paper should be sent to me by the King's authority?"

"Lock it up," replied Putnam boldly, "till we [he meant the Sons of Liberty] shall visit you again."

"And what will you do then?" asked the Governor.

"We shall expect you to give us the key of the room in which it is deposited; and, if you think fit, in order to screen yourself from blame, you may forewarn us upon our peril not to enter the room."

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“And what will you do afterwards?”

“Send it safely back again.”

“But what if I should refuse admission?”

“In such case your house will be leveled with the dust in five minutes!”

He meant it, and the Governor knew he did; so no stamps were sent to Connecticut.

The next year, 1766, Putnam was one of the two chosen by the Windham County Committee to correspond with members of the organization in the other colonies, in order to keep up opposition to the Stamp Act. He was elected one of their two representatives to the Colonial Legislature in that year, and was in Hartford and shared in the great jubilations that ensued when the news came that the Stamp Act had been repealed by the King and Parliament.

After the legislature had adjourned, which was in the early summer, Putnam, who had gone back to his farm, met with a serious accident; he fractured his right thigh, which caused him to limp all the rest of his life. In spite of this, he attended the fall and winter sessions of the Legislature at New-Haven and Hartford.

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In the meantime the widower was beginning to "take notice," and the cause of this "noticing" was an attractive widow, Mrs. Deborah Lothrop Gardiner. In those days second and even third marriages were very common, for, as we have seen, it was not considered good for either man or woman to live alone. Putnam married Mrs. Gardiner on June 3, 1767. She had one grown-up son who was a clergyman, and also a young son and daughter, Hannah and Septimus Gardiner, nine and seven respectively. Putnam's son Israel was now twenty-seven, married and carrying on his father's farm, his eldest daughter Hannah was married and had a home of her own. The next three Putnam children, Mehitable, Mary and Eunice, divided their time between their brother Israel's and their father's house, after his second marriage, while the two youngest, Daniel and little Peter, lived with Israel and their stepmother and the new little stepbrother and sister.

Mrs. Putnam was a good and charming woman, with more social graces, perhaps, than her rough and ready soldier husband. She brought many influential new connections, of those who were con-

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sidered the Connecticut aristocracy, into the family circle, and these, with Putnam's already large host of friends, kept the newly-wed pair busy entertaining.

Everybody came—old soldiers, “relatives, friends, traveling ministers, distinguished strangers, and gushing patriots.” Even in those days of low cost of living, so many visitors could not help but be an expensive luxury to the host. Putnam did not wish to turn them away—but he did not wish to be ruined, either. Suddenly he had a brilliant idea. Why not turn his house into an inn? No sooner thought of than done. He suddenly removed his residence to a large mansion on Brooklyn Green and opened it to the public.

In those days all inns had gay, hand-painted wooden sign-boards hung in front of them to attract the attention of travelers. Before Putnam's hung a picture of General Wolfe, the hero of Louisbourg and Quebec, in full uniform, in a fiery attitude, as if charging at the foe. At the outbreak of the Revolution the sign had to come down. English military heroes were not popular then. Perhaps that is the period when the sign was sprinkled

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with shot holes, which you may see in it today in the rooms of the Connecticut Historical Society at Hartford.

Putnam was just the right person for an inn-keeper of that period. "The landlord of colonial days," says Alice Morse Earle, in her interesting book, "Stage Coach and Tavern Days," "was certainly the best known, often the most popular, and ever the most picturesque and cheerful figure." He had to be a man of high character, or he could not get a license from the stern New England authorities. He was often, like Putnam, a retired provincial officer.

The genial Colonel Putnam was in his element, then, in his new profession. He knew how to offer comfortable entertainment to "man and beast"; and when the guests were gathered about his roaring big fire, he entertained them with shrewd comment on current affairs, or with stirring tales of the late war-time. His new occupation gave Putnam also a chance to keep in closest touch with what was going on in the world, for in those days, when newspapers were scarce and news traveled from mouth to mouth, the latest was always to be

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had at the inn, where strangers came and townspeople met to conduct their local business. Putnam by this means knew all the varying degrees of sentiment in the colony in these troubled times; and in his own outspoken and wholehearted way did a great deal to influence public opinion toward the patriot side.

To count up the honors which "Old Put" received during this comparatively restful period of his career: he was Selectman, an office given only to persons of "wisdom and uprightness," Moderator of the Town Meeting, served on committees to rebuild "Danielson's Bridge," lay out new roads, rearrange school districts, engage schoolmasters, collect taxes, etc.; he was put in charge of the building of the new meeting-house; he was made bell-ringer of the meeting-house, a very important office, only given to persons of the utmost trustworthiness; and, added to all these, was still another office carrying something of distinction which perhaps we cannot quite appreciate nowadays—he was made "receiver of crow's heads"—or the person who counted and paid a bounty of sixpence on each crow's head (or two pence on each young crow's

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head) to those who killed these mischievous enemies of the farmers!

At the end of five or six years of this peaceful, but busy life, the Colonel set out for a new corner of the globe. Business called him this time; he was to claim a grant of land which he was told had been extended to him in the far South.



XIV

“THE COMPANY OF MILITARY  
ADVENTURERS”



## XIV

### “THE COMPANY OF MILITARY ADVENTURERS”

THE Company of Military Adventurers”—hasn't that a romantic and swash-buckling sound? So thought Daniel Putnam, Israel's thirteen-year-old son. He could hardly believe in his good fortune when his father told him, one winter morning, that he, Daniel, was actually to accompany him on a trip South as unofficial member of the “Exploring Committee” of the said company.

“Oh, Jiminy!” cried Daniel. “Maybe I'll have a chance to shoot a real alligator!”

“I shouldn't wonder,” replied his father; “we are going up to the Mississippi River, where there will be plenty of them.”

It seemed that Putnam's old general, Phineas Lyman, was leading an expedition of former soldiers and officers to the Mississippi Valley, expecting to obtain for them a grant of lands in this region in

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return for their valiant services to the British Government. General Lyman had been in England for the past ten years trying to obtain this grant. The English court, according to the pleasing habit of courts, had kept him dangling and disappointed for years, but at last, in 1772, he thought he had attained his object, and returned to America. Here he formed the company with the romantic name.

Daniel, his father, and cousin, Lieutenant Rufus Putnam, made the trip to New York on horseback as far as Norwich, and from there in a sloop down the Sound and up the East River to New York. They had an exciting passage through Hell Gate, where their sloop was nearly wrecked on account of a bad pilot. Daniel was wild with excitement, which he tried his best not to show, when the sloop finally touched at the dock and they landed and made their way over the cobbled streets of the town. He had never seen so many buildings before, and such handsome ones, of red and black Dutch bricks, with stately high stoops. It was Sunday, and as they crossed Broadway the people were returning from church. After dinner, at the modest tavern where they put up, the Putnams

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went to church also, the Brick Presbyterian, where they heard Dr. John Rodgers, a noted divine. This was the largest church Daniel had ever been in, and he found plenty to interest him in its construction and the looks and manners of the congregation, even if the good Doctor's sermon was somewhat over his head.

Early the next morning he begged his father or his cousin to take him sightseeing. Though New York then extended over only an infinitesimal part of its present area, there was much for him to gaze at—the fort and Battery, the Mall near Trinity Church where the fine ladies walked in the afternoons, and King's College, where boys his own age were studying. But more interesting than all were the docks, smelling of tar, oakum, molasses and raw sugar, with spicy smells of cargoes from still farther lands, the gallant sloops with their tall masts, and the bronzed tattooed sailors, with gold or brass rings in their ears. As his father was busy much of the time superintending the preparation of the vessel on which they were to sail, Daniel had plenty of opportunity to wander about these fascinating docks.

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On December 25, a day which in Daniel's part of the world had never been marked by any special celebration, he was surprised to find the New Yorkers suspending business just as if it were Sunday. The Putnams had few New York acquaintances, so Daniel did not guess at the merry doings inside the houses which marked the Dutch and English observation of Christmas and New Year's—the presents—the burning of the Yule log—the plum puddings all on fire—the wassail bowls—and the merry dances in which old and young joined. If he had, I am afraid the heart of that thirteen-year-old boy would have been envious in spite of his Puritan bringing-up!

The next day, too, was a holiday, or "hollow Day," as Putnam, the elder, wrote it in his diary. On Sunday came another sermon; this time it was at "ye oald English Church." This was Trinity Church, on the site of which, in New York, another Trinity Church building now stands, surrounded by its old graveyard, a restful oasis in the midst of towering skyscrapers.

During the next two weeks preparations for the voyage went briskly forward, and on January

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10, 1773, the Company of Military Adventurers, with their young companion, set sail in their good ship *Mississippi*.

On January 25 they crossed the Tropic of Cancer, and a few days later sailed among the Bahama Islands. On January 31 they entered the harbor of St. Nicholas' Mole, on the northwestern end of the Island of Haiti. They stayed there four days, which gave Daniel a chance to explore this strange new tropical country, with its dark-skinned people, and beautiful tropical vegetation. On February 4 they coasted along the rocky coast of Haiti, saw on their right Cuba, on the shore of which Daniel's father had been wrecked in the Havana campaign ten years before, neared the north coast of Jamaica and landed at Montego Bay.

There the three Putnams went to visit a Jamaica plantation. Daniel was frightened when a savage dog attacked the manager, who was showing them about. But if he was anything like a modern boy, he could not help laughing, even if he did his best to conceal it decorously, when his father, in an attempt to drive the dog away, fell backward into a vat of Jamaica rum, the principal product of the

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plantation! This necessitated a hasty return on Israel's part to the ship, to change his rum-soaked garments.

The next day it was discovered that the town was full of smallpox, so no one ventured from the ship who had not had the disease. They weighed anchor that day and took their leave of Jamaica.

They sailed northwest to Cape San Antonio, Cuba, encountering extremely hot weather and being delayed by a calm, so that it took them a week to make the short voyage. Thence they sailed for Pensacola, Florida, reaching there in ten days. There was an English army post there, and Daniel's father met two of his old friends of the French and Indian War, General Frederick Haldimand, of the St. Lawrence expedition, and Major John Small.

The Military Adventurers were exceedingly surprised and disappointed at this place to find that no royal instructions had been received in Florida regarding their supposed grant of land on the Mississippi. "However," as Rufus Putnam wrote in his diary, "the possibility of its yet arriving, with the proposal made for granting Lands to the company on terms within the power of the Governor



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and Council induced the Committee to resolve on proceeding on the business of reconnoitering the country on the Mississippi and to make such Surveys as we might think proper.”

They set sail in their sloop again, on the dazzling blue water of the Gulf of Mexico, and four days later came in sight of the archipelagos of small islands which guard the mouth of the Mississippi. They turned, and were soon in the main channel of the river, wide, yellow and sunny, flowing between low banks lined with endless brakes of cottonwood and willow. Daniel, who was keeping a sharp lookout, presently saw a long, widening ripple in the water, and cried, “Alligators!” Sure enough, it was one. On their way up the river Israel Putnam shot three.

On March 30 they reached New Orleans, a French town which had been ceded, together with the rest of French Louisiana, to the Spaniards, ten years before, but which still kept its French customs and population. There were about three thousand two hundred inhabitants here, of whom a third were negro slaves. The Military Adventurers landed at the dike by the water front; found the

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streets unpaved, sometimes almost impassable, and swarming with reptiles, and the houses all built up on stilts about fifteen feet from the ground. The main part of the little town was very squalid, but out on the Bayou Road were the handsome residences of the French planters, red-roofed houses surrounded with wide verandas, in the midst of indigo and myrtle plantations. Through the open doors Daniel caught glimpses of lofty halls leading to spacious drawing-rooms, where beautiful Creole girls, dressed with foreign elegance, talked and laughed with true French gayety, and were waited upon hand and foot by the numerous black slaves.

The Military Adventurers stayed in New Orleans about a week; then, as their captain, for some reason, refused to take the sloop further, they continued their trip in small boats or bateaux. They were free to continue up the river, since the English owned the lands on the east side of the Mississippi above Orleans Island.

In a few days they came to an Acadian settlement. These Acadians, as perhaps you know from reading Longfellow's "Evangeline," had been taken

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by the English from their homes in Nova Scotia and scattered all over the colonies. Theirs was a sad fate, though history tells us, that from the point of view of the British Government, their removal was necessary, because the simple, obstinate peasants were so much under the influence of their French priests, who in turn made themselves tools of the French Government, that they refused to take the oath of allegiance to the English, in spite of fifty years of kind treatment on their side, and were therefore a source of great danger to the English in case of another war.

There was no Longfellow yet to tell in poetry the story of the Acadians, but the Putnams heard it instead from the lips of the refugees themselves—of their “exile without an end, and without an example in story.” Those who reached this far land of Louisiana were the happiest. They found there other French people to keep them company, a fruitful soil, and a far kindlier climate than in their lost Acadia. There they built them the long, low houses with wide galleries covered with climbing roses and honeysuckle vines, where the mocking birds made their nests, where the negroes laughed

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and sang in the negro cabins at the rear, and the boundless prairies stretched back of them, fertile pasture-lands for their herds of cattle. They might well have exclaimed to our wayfarers, as Basil the blacksmith does in the poem,

Here no hungry winter congeals our blood like the rivers;  
Here no stony ground provokes the wrath of the farmer.  
Smoothly the ploughshare runs through the soil as a keel  
through the water.

All the year round the orange groves are in blossom;  
and grass grows  
More in a single night than a whole Canadian summer.  
Here, too, numberless herds run wild and unclaimed in  
the prairies;  
Here, too, lands may be had for the asking, and forests  
of timber  
With a few blows of the axe are hewn and framed into  
houses.  
After your houses are built, and your fields are yellow  
with harvests,  
No King George of England shall drive you away from  
your homesteads,  
Burning your dwellings and barns, and stealing your farms  
and your cattle.

There today their descendants form a distinct  
and numerous population.

After stopping at this transplanted Acadia for

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a day, the explorers went on up the Mississippi, sometimes rowing against the current and sometimes advancing by means of tow-ropes pulled by a part of the crew on shore. It was a hard, hot, monotonous trip, and they were all glad to reach Fort Rosalie, the site of Natchez, four hundred miles from the Gulf. Fifty years before, the entire garrison, two hundred men, had been massacred by the Natchez Indians, and the women and children carried away. The latter were afterward returned to New Orleans, and adopted by the people. From Natchez they turned and went fifty miles, nearly to the mouth of the Bayou Pierre. Bayou is a term used to describe those streams which take water from the Mississippi and empty it into the Gulf. They are caused by the deposit of silt, which blocks a part of the main channel of the stream.

The scenery of this bayou was at first interesting to the Putnams, but soon grew monotonous. Day after day they glided over the brown water, between swampy jungles, where the trees were draped heavily with the pall-like strands of the gray, hanging moss. Now and then a blue or a white heron

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took its silent flight over them, a vulture flapped heavily away from a dead branch, or the ripple of an alligator broke the mirror-like calmness of the stream. They retraced their way, reached the Mississippi again, and then explored the Big Black River, a few miles above Natchez, in what is now the State of Mississippi. Israel Putnam and some of the others, with a Choctaw Indian as guide, set off on foot and did a good deal of exploring by land, getting almost to the Walnut Hills. They were stopped by a chief of the Choctaws, who forbade them to go further, and showed them a commission he had received from Governor Chester, granting the Choctaws certain rights in this region.

Upon hearing this, the party thought it best to return down the Mississippi, landing and exploring parts of the eastern bank on the way. A few miles below the Bayou Manchac, nearly a hundred miles from the mouth of the Mississippi, they found their sloop, which the captain had brought up the river to meet them. They gladly embarked in it, and after a few days came in sight of the small, reedy islands, and the bright green sea-marshes of Mississippi Sound. Then the wind blew keen and

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cool upon them, and the broad, bright expanse of the Gulf burst upon their eyes, weary of the brown water and monotonous windings of the Mississippi.

In three weeks they were in New York again. This time Daniel was not so anxious to explore the city, for he could hardly wait to get back to Pomfret and tell his family and boy friends of all the things he had seen. He and his father and cousin Rufus, took passage on a sloop for Norwich. Their dangers were not yet over; the sloop sprung her mast, and they had trouble reaching port. But at last they were there, and then they took passage in a row-boat up the river, and made the last stage of the journey home by horse-back, which seemed to Daniel and his father a remarkably solid and comfortable way of traveling after all the months of water journey. By August 12 they were back at Wolfe Tavern—and Daniel probably put on such airs over his travels that his stepbrother and sister and the younger Putnam children wished that he had never gone.

But it seemed that things had happened and were happening in New England which made the

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Southland tame by comparison. Daniel's interest in the Mississippi faded into the background when, soon after his return, he heard his elders vehemently discussing the tax on tea, which they were resolved not to pay, because it stood for the principle of taxation without representation, hated by the colonies. He heard that a large cargo of the tea had been shipped to Boston.

"What will be done with it?" he asked his father.

"I don't know—but it will never be landed," was Israel's reply.

Soon after the seventeenth of December the news of the Boston Tea Party reached the Putnams. The patriots of Boston had defied the King's authority and dumped the tea into the harbor rather than pay duty on it. During the action, not a person was harmed nor other property injured. The mob—if mob it could be called—was not rioting—it was acting in defense of a principle. Putnam explained this to his children. He wanted them to know the real meaning of the disturbance. He told them that the liberty of their country was at stake, and that he was ready to fight to defend it if necessary.



XV

ON TO BOSTON!



## XV

### ON TO BOSTON!

**I**N July, 1774, the Connecticut people heard that the British Government had retaliated upon Massachusetts by taking from her the power to choose her own officers and representatives in the Assembly, by sending troops to Boston, and by closing the Boston port to all but warships. This meant the stopping of all trade and nearly all business—it meant starvation for Boston, unless sufficient supplies could reach her over the narrow isthmus that connected the city with the mainland.

As soon as he heard the news, Colonel Putnam was astir. He got on his horse and rode all over his part of Connecticut, asking people for supplies to send to Boston. In a few days he had collected a drove of one hundred and thirty sheep, of which his own farm had furnished a large number. Some men would have sent these to Boston under the care

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of a farm laborer, but not so Putnam. He was not too great a man to escort the sheep all the way to the distressed city himself. He was greeted in Boston with great enthusiasm, and stayed at the house of Dr. Joseph Warren, a young man who was one of the most prominent patriots in Massachusetts.

The British army had its quarters on Boston Common, and many of the officers there were friends of Putnam—General Gage, Major Small, Lord Percy, and others. Putnam went to see them. They entered into friendly, but hot, political discussions. Major Small bantered him about coming down to fight.

“Twenty ships-of-the-line and twenty regiments may be expected from England,” he told Putnam, “in case a submission is not speedily made by Boston.”

“If they come,” said Putnam quickly, “I am ready to treat them as enemies.”

Other officers, who had not heard this retort, asked him what part he would take in case of war.

“I shall take part with my country in any event,”

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answered Putnam, without a second's hesitation.

"Can you, who have seen so many English victories of fleets and armies, doubt that the English can easily acquire a country which does not own a single ship, regiment, or magazine?" they asked.

"I can only say," answered the Connecticut Colonel, "that justice would be on our side, and the event with Providence. But I have calculated that if it took the combined forces of England and her colonies six years to conquer such a feeble country as Canada, it would take, at least, a very long time for England alone to overcome her own widely extended colonies, which are much stronger than Canada. When men fight for everything dear, in what they believe the most sacred of all causes, and in their own native land, they have great advantages over their enemies who are not in the same situation. For my part, having considered all the circumstances, I fully believe America would not be so easily conquered by England as you gentlemen seem to expect!"

"Seriously now, Colonel Putnam," asked an officer, "don't you think a well-appointed British army

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of five thousand veterans could march through the whole continent of America?"

"No doubt they could," replied Putnam, with a twinkle in his eye. "No doubt they could, if they behaved civilly, and paid well for everything they wanted. But," he went on, "if they should attempt it in a hostile manner (though the American men were out of the question), the women, with their ladles and broomsticks, would knock them all on the head before they had got halfway through!"

After a few days Putnam returned home. He had hardly reached there when he received a letter from a Boston gentleman saying that the British troops and artillery had fired upon the Boston people on the preceding night, and that men from all over New England were hastening to the spot.

Putnam had no reason to disbelieve the letter. He sent it on by messenger, and himself alarmed the countryside. Soon the roads to Boston were crowded with people. Putnam was ahead of them, with a few companions. They had not gone far when they met a messenger who told them that it was all a mistake, and that the alarm had been caused by General Gage's sending some soldiers to

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seize some powder and cannon in Charlestown. Putnam at once returned and sent the people he met back to their homes. The occurrence had showed what a force could be raised at a few hours' notice, and greatly alarmed the British in Boston.

The Assembly of Massachusetts, which had been dissolved, organized itself into a Provincial Congress, appointed Committees of Safety and Supplies, and voted to raise an army of twelve thousand men. All over New England the militia organized and drilled on the village greens. Many of them were, like Putnam, experienced fighters in the previous war. One-fourth part of them were ready to fight at a minute's notice, and were called minutemen. Meanwhile the blockade of Boston went on, the friction between the British and the Colonials increased steadily, and Gage determined to make an aggressive movement. He sent out soldiers to seize the military stores collected at Concord, Mass.

One warm day in April, 1765, Israel Putnam and his son Daniel were plowing in the fields. Suddenly they heard the sound of galloping hoofs and the rat-tat-tat of a drum. A man on horseback

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was galloping down the road. He reined up his horse for a moment and shouted, "War's begun! British troops have fired upon our men at Lexington, and we chased them all the way to Cambridge!" then passed on, in a cloud of dust.

Colonel Putnam dropped the handle of his plow and unharnessed his horse.

"Go home and tell your mother that I've gone to Boston!" he cried to Daniel. He mounted the farm horse and was off down the road.

Daniel gazed after him with his mouth open. It had all happened so quickly that he felt as if he must be dreaming. Then he realized that he was not, and that he must go home and deliver his message. But how he longed to be on the way to Boston, too! And, presently, he was to have his wish.

The next day "Old Put" was in Boston. He had traveled not less than one hundred miles on horseback in twenty-four hours, for he had gone out of his way to alarm the countryside. He attended a council of war in Cambridge the day he arrived, and the parole of the day was "Putnam," in his honor.



## ON TO BOSTON!

He found that the British were safely hemmed in in Boston, so he went away for a week to attend the session of the Connecticut Legislature at Hartford and help in the levying of troops. He was given the rank of Second Brigadier-General of the Connecticut forces. His influence and reputation induced many Connecticut men to join the army. Men who had been in the French and Canadian War were especially anxious to fight under brave "Old Put." Putnam soon returned to Cambridge, making arrangements for his troops to follow him.

Soon sixteen thousand New England men were besieging General Gage in Boston. Their camps were stretched out in a great semi-circle, all the way from Jamaica Plain to Charlestown Neck. Artemas Ward was commander-in-chief. His headquarters were at Cambridge, and he kept Putnam with one regiment near him there so that he could ask his advice.

Putnam was busy all the time. His son Daniel had managed to join him, and has left us a very interesting account of what he observed of his father's doings. "His experience had taught him,"

## ISRAEL PUTNAM

he said, "that raw and undisciplined troops *must* be employed in some way or other, or they would soon become vicious and unmanageable. His maxim was, 'It is better to dig a ditch every morning and fill it up at evening than to have the men idle.'" However, there was plenty of real work to do in throwing up defenses at Cambridge at various points. Putnam was said by an eyewitness to be "constantly on horseback or on foot, working with his men or encouraging them." A soldier who was not working as hard as he might told afterwards that "Old Put" demanded of him and his comrades to what regiment they belonged. "To Colonel Doolittle's," they replied.

"Doolittle? Do nothing at all!" exclaimed "Old Put" scathingly.

General Gage heard that Putnam was leading a part of the forces that were besieging Boston, and as he knew that he had many warm friends among the British officers, he hoped that he might be prevailed upon to come over to the British side. He accordingly sent a secret messenger to Putnam saying that if he would turn Loyalist he might count upon being made a Major-General of the Brit-

## ON TO BOSTON!

ish army, and would receive a great deal of money for his services. Needless to say, General Putnam refused the offer with contempt.

Gage had plenty of reason to wish Putnam with him instead of against him. Some popular verses about the siege of Boston, written by John Trumbull, a patriot of the time, give an idea of the state of affairs.

Nay, stern with rage, grim Putnam boiling,  
Plundered both Hogg and Noddle Island;  
Scared troops of Tories into town,  
Burned all their hay and houses down,  
And menaced Gage unless he'd flee,  
To drive him headlong to the sea.

And the poet goes on, speaking of an agreement which Gage had violated to let the people of Boston leave town:

So Gage of late agreed you know,  
To let the Boston people go,  
Yet when he saw, 'gainst troops that braved him,  
They were the only guards that saved him,  
Kept off that Satan of a Putnam,  
From breaking in to maul and mutt'n him,  
He'd too much wit such leagues to observe,  
And shut them in again to starve.

## ISRAEL PUTNAM

There are references here to some exciting skirmishes Putnam commanded, during which droves of valuable livestock were safely driven ashore at low tide from Hog Island and Noddle Island, in Boston Harbor, under the fire of British armed vessels and the British battery in what is now East Boston. The patriots during the Noddle Island skirmish set fire to one British schooner and disabled a British sloop, capturing several ship cannon and other valuable property.

A good many prisoners having been taken on each side in the skirmishes around Boston, an exchange was provided for. General Putnam and Dr. Warren were appointed to receive them on the American side. When they reached Cambridge, the place of the exchange, they found Majors Moncreiffe and Small in charge of the British prisoners. Both were old friends of Putnam. He fairly ran into their arms. It is said that he kissed them. His heart was too warm to let political differences interfere with personal feelings. When the exchange was completed, all the officers went to the house of Dr. Foster nearby, and had a friendly meal and visit; then they separated to their respective armies.

## ON TO BOSTON!

Three more British generals arrived on the twenty-fifth of May—Sir William Howe, a brother of the popular young officer who had been killed at Ticonderoga, Sir Henry Clinton, and Burgoyne. They brought reënforcements from England which raised Gage's army to ten thousand men. The patriots heard that Gage planned to seize Dorchester Heights on the night of June 18. They determined to anticipate him, and a council of officers was held.

Putnam had been urging for weeks that they make a bold movement and seize Bunker Hill. When Ward and Warren opposed the idea, on the ground that they had very little gunpowder and no battering cannon, he said that he did not expect to shell Boston, but to draw the enemy out where they might meet them on equal terms in battle. He said that the army was eager for an engagement, and tired of doing nothing; that he only wished to risk two thousand men, and that they would set their country an example of which it would not be ashamed, and show those who oppressed them what men could do who were determined to live *free* or not live at all!

Young Dr. Warren answered, "Almost thou per-

## ISRAEL PUTNAM

suadest me, General Putnam, but I must still think the project a rash one. Nevertheless, if it should ever be adopted and the strife becomes hard, you must not be surprised to find me with you in the midst of it."

"I hope not, sir," said Putnam, "you are yet but a young man, and our country has much to hope from you both in council and in war. It is only a little brush we have been contemplating; let some of us who are older and can well enough be spared begin the fray; there will be time enough for you hereafter, for it will not soon be ended."

XVI

BUNKER HILL





## XVI

### BUNKER HILL

**A**FFAIRS had now come to a point where Putnam's plan was the only one to follow. At sunset, June 16, a brigade of twelve hundred men, under the command of Colonel Prescott, of Pepperell, Maine, paraded on Cambridge Common, where prayers were said by Dr. Langdon, President of Harvard College. When darkness came, the little army, guided by two servants carrying dark lanterns, felt their way over Charlestown Neck in almost perfect silence. Once across, there was a discussion among the leaders whether Bunker Hill, or Breed's Hill, nearer the harbor, should be fortified. Breed's Hill was finally decided upon, and at midnight the soldiers fell to throwing up earthworks.

Putnam had been stationed by General Ward back of the Neck at a point which the latter thought would be attacked by the British in an effort to cut

## ISRAEL PUTNAM

off the Colonials' retreat from the Neck. But superintendence of this did not take up Putnam's whole time, and he simply could not bear to keep out of what was going on on the Hill. Though everything had been kept secret the day before, his son Daniel, who was at his father's post, knew that the latter was to be in some important action. We have Daniel's own account of his father's leave-taking.

"A little after sunset my father called me aside and said, 'You will go to Mrs. Inman's as usual to-night, and it is time you were gone. You need not return here in the morning, but stay there tomorrow; the family may want you and if they find it necessary to leave the house, you must go with them where they go; and try now, my son, to be as serviceable to them as you can.'"

Mrs. Inman was the wife of a Tory refugee in Boston. She and her family lived on a farm near Putnam's post, which was surrounded by "rebel" troops, and kindhearted General Putnam stationed Daniel at her house in order that she might feel protected amongst those whom she considered her enemies.

"This order," says Daniel, "connected with what



ISRAEL PUTNAM  
From a portrait by Wilkinson



## BUNKER HILL

I had seen during the day, left no doubt in my mind that some military movement was going forward in which my father was to participate. I called to mind his abstraction and self-communing, the broken sentences that had escape him, indicating battle and blood-shedding, and my imagination pictured him as mangled with wounds and none to help him. With earnest entreaty I asked leave to accompany him. 'You, dear father,' I said, 'may need my assistance much more than Mrs. Inman; pray let me go where you are going.'—'No, no, Daniel, do as I have bid you,' was the answer which he affected to give sternly, while his voice trembled and his eyes filled. Then, as if perfectly comprehending what had been passing in my mind, he added, 'You can do little, my son, where I am going, and besides, there will be enough to take care of me.' "

"I went as directed to Mrs. Inman's, but took no interest in the conversation of her nieces or the maternal kindness of their aunt; my mind was elsewhere, and I retired early to bed, but not to sleep; the night was as sleepless to me as to those who were toiling or watching on the confines of Boston.

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I had a strong suspicion that Charlestown was the spot to which the hostile movement was directed; and long before the first gun was fired I had risen and seated myself at the window of my chamber, anxiously looking thitherward."

The daybreak that Daniel waited for came all too soon to the workers on Breed's Hill. They had had only three short hours of darkness during which to raise defenses. When it grew light, those on the British ships perceived what was going on and commenced firing. Luckily the trenches were deep enough already for the men to shelter themselves.

The people in Boston heard the cannon, and crowded the housetops to see what was going on. It was as if a drop curtain had gone up, and they were spectators at some enthralling play. There were Tories there who applauded every shot from the ships' guns; there were patriots, who, like Daniel, trembled because their near relatives were out in the trenches.

At noon the British landed troops on the shore below Breed's Hill. Howe led them, supported by many other brave English officers. The English had decided to attack the Americans in front. They

## BUNKER HILL

did not think the rebels would give them much trouble.

Putnam had spent a strenuous night and morning. Eye-witnesses have described how he galloped here and there on his white horse. He was in his shirt-sleeves, with an old white felt hat on his head. One minute he would be at Bunker Hill, furiously urging on the fortifications there, which he was determined not to give up—it was against his advice that they had moved on to fortify Breed's Hill—at another he was bringing up cannon to the front—at another he was riding across the Neck, now raked by shell from the enemy's ships, on his way back to Cambridge to beg slow, timid old General Ward to send reënforcements. He did not have charge of the battle, but he was the life and soul of it, inspiring the men, shaming cowards, urging everything forward.

When the British actually landed, Putnam hurried to the front. He knew now that the post General Ward had given him in the rear was not threatened and that he could leave it permanently. He saw that the earthwork on Breed's Hill was still incomplete. A place on the left was undefended.

## ISRAEL PUTNAM

Putnam ordered a rail fence some distance back pulled up and placed behind another, with hay between, to form a fairly effective breastwork. He stationed soldiers behind it.

Warren came on the field, as he had threatened he would. Putnam again remonstrated. He was not half so anxious to have other and younger officers risk their lives as he was to risk his own.

"I am sorry to see you here, General Warren," he said. "I wish you had left the day to us, as I advised you. From appearances, we shall have a sharp time of it. But, since you are here, I will receive your orders with pleasure."

Dr. Warren was now President of the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, and had also recently been appointed a major-general in the army of his colony. He therefore was of higher rank than Putnam.

The young man replied modestly, "I came only as a volunteer; I know nothing of your dispositions, and will not interfere with them; tell me where I can be most useful."

Putnam directed him to the redoubt which Colonel Prescott's men had built. He thought it the



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safest place, and said, "You will be covered there."

"Do not think I come to seek a place of safety," answered Warren indignantly. "Tell me where the onset will be most furious."

Putnam again pointed to the redoubt. "That," said he, "is the enemy's object. Prescott is there, and will do his duty. If that can be defended, the day is ours; but, from long experience of the character of the enemy, I think they will finally succeed, and drive us from the works; though, from the mode of attack which they have chosen, we shall be able to do them infinite injury; and we must be prepared for a brave and orderly retreat, when we can maintain our ground no longer."

Warren thanked him, and went to the redoubt. The men there cheered him, and Prescott offered him the command, which he again declined.

Old General Seth Pomeroy, now in his seventieth year, and one of Putnam's bravest comrades in the Crown Point campaign, had, in spite of feeble health, ridden from his home in Northampton to attend the battle. When he reached the Neck, he found it so swept by the enemy's fire, that he was afraid to risk his borrowed horse on it, so he dis-

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mounted and walked across. As he strode up the Hill, gun in hand, Putnam saw him and exclaimed, "By God, Pomeroy, you here! A cannon-shot would waken you out of your grave!"

Meanwhile the British were drawn up on the strand below, waiting for reënforcements. Putnam rode across the Neck again at peril of his life and at last persuaded General Ward to send more troops. The New Hampshire troops and Putnam's Connecticut men were ordered to the front. Putnam assigned them to their posts and generally directed the forces not commanded by Prescott.

Rat-tat-tat! The drums were calling the British to action. They advanced in solid ranks over the green grass of the meadows. They wore bright red coats, with white belts. Their arms flashed in the sun of the hot June day. They were some of the best regiments of Old England, led by gallant officers.

Nearer and nearer they came, while the American farmers waited for them in the trenches. This was their first battle against English troops. They were badly organized and practically undisciplined. They had worked all night and half the hot June day with-

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out a bite to eat or a drop to drink; they were nearly fagged out. Could they stand their ground against the King's trained army?

There was no doubt as to that question in Putnam's mind, anyway. He had fought with these same New England farmers. He knew what they were made of. His only fear was that they would fire too soon. He rode along the line giving orders.

"Men, you are all of you marksmen—don't one of you fire until you see the whites of their eyes!"

"Powder is scarce and must not be wasted."

"Fire low."

"Take aim at the waistbands."

"Aim at the handsome coats—pick off the commanders."

Similar orders were given by Prescott, Pomeroy, Stark and other veteran officers.

The British advanced steadily. Gage had blundered in making each of his redcoats carry one hundred pounds of provisions besides their heavy arms and ammunition. They were cramped by their tight coats; they sweated and panted. But their courage was firm. They thought they would have no trouble storming the lines of these rascally rebels. Howe

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planned first to take the redoubt which Prescott commanded.

They were within eight rods of it when the Americans fired. Each Yankee had leveled his flintlock at some particular soldier. When the shots blazed out the British lines shivered and fell like grass before the mower. The men were in heaps, struggling, groaning and dying. Their blood stained the bright green grass. General Pigot had to give the word to retreat.

Meanwhile General Howe led his men to the rail fence. Some of Putnam's men here had discharged their muskets too soon. Putnam rode frantically behind the lines threatening to cut down with his sword the next offender. When the British were at the right distance, his men fired in a body—again, when the smoke cleared away, the same terrible scenes were visible. Here too the British had to retreat. They had been hampered by the failure of their artillery to work properly. The Master of Ordnance had made a mistake and sent cannon balls which were too large.

The English were not ready to give up, but rallied for another charge. Again the deadly Ameri-

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can fire worked fearful havoc with their ranks. The British shot mostly went over the heads of the Americans.

Putnam, besides directing the gun-fire at the rail-fence, had been trying to get the artillery into action. Colonel Gerrish had some artillery, but he could not or would not bring his pieces forward. His men had not been trained to use artillery, and they had all scattered. General Putnam came to one of the pieces, and furiously inquired where the officers were. A soldier told him that the cartridges were too big and could not be loaded. Putnam said they *could* be loaded. He took a cartridge, broke it open, and loaded it with pieces with a ladle. He helped the soldiers to load two or three others in the same way, and the cannon were discharged. He found an artillery officer retreating behind a hill, and threatened him with instant death if he did not go back. He finally had the men drag the artillery to the rail fence, where he directed the discharges.

The British had set fire to Charlestown, and a detachment of the British, under cover of the smoke, tried to gain the rear of the Americans. Putnam's

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sharp old eyes detected the movement, and he plied his cannon with such effect that the British were beaten back.

But with bull-dog courage, the English charged for the third time. The powder of the Americans was nearly exhausted. They resorted to muskets, and picked off the officers. Three times General Howe was left alone, so many of his staff had fallen around him. It is thought the reason the Americans spared him was the affection they had felt for his splendid brother, who died at Ticonderoga. It is known that Major Small's life was spared through Putnam's intervention. Small saw several American marksmen leveling their pieces at him, and considered himself as good as killed. Just then Putnam rushed forward, struck up the muzzles of the pieces with his sword, and cried out, "For God's sake, my lads, don't fire at that man! I love him as I do my brother." Small heard him distinctly, bowed, thanked him, and walked away unharmed.

Putnam's action was reciprocated by another English officer, Colonel Abercrombie, who, as he lay dying in front of the redoubt, exclaimed, "If you

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take General Putnam alive, don't hang him, for he is a brave fellow."

At last the Americans' powder was completely gone. They clubbed their muskets and fought with them. Then they began hurling stones from the breastworks. But the British now knew their weakness. They swept on. Pigot scaled the redoubt, followed by his men. Prescott had to order a retreat, which was accomplished by his men in an orderly manner. Prescott and Warren were the last to leave the redoubt, Warren had just left it when a bullet struck him in the forehead, and he fell, dying.

Putnam was riding up and down on the slope behind the Neck, shouting to some late reënforcements to hurry to the front. "Press on, press on," he cried. "Our brethren are suffering, and will be cut off." The musket-balls flew around him, but he never noticed them. Then he hurried to the front again. His men at the rail fence were the last to retreat, and he could not believe that they were actually forced to do so. Not realizing that their powder was all gone, he begged them wildly to rally and renew the fight.

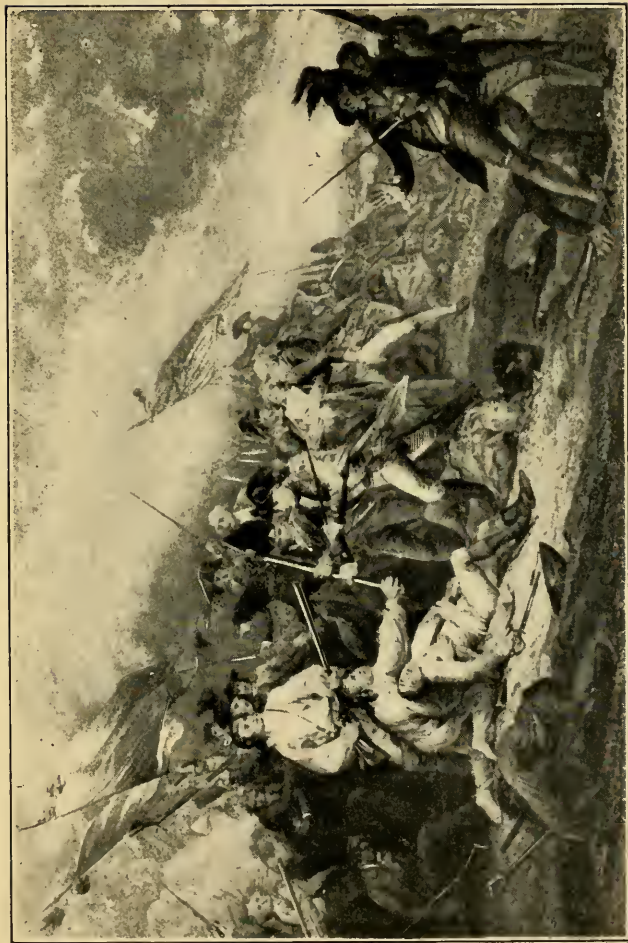
## ISRAEL PUTNAM

“Make a stand here,” he shouted, waving his sword in the air. “We can stop them yet!” “In God’s name form and give them one shot more.” This was at Bunker Hill, which he still hoped might be defended. But the soldiers pressed on past him. “Halt, you damned cowards,” he yelled, “halt and give them another shot.” (“Old Put” apologized long afterwards to his church for the violent language he used at Bunker Hill. “But it was enough to make an angel swear,” he declared, “to see the rascals run away from the British!”)

At last he took his stand near a field-piece and seemed determined to brave the foe alone. His troops had left, and one cannot blame them. One sergeant only dared to stand with Putnam; he was shot down, and the enemy’s bayonets were just upon the General when he retreated.

The General is immortalized in this final stand both in picture and verse. Opposite page 216 you will see a reproduction of a picture by Trumbull, where Putnam, in the rear, is waving his sword at the enemy. Joel Barlow, a Yale graduate who wrote the “Vision of Columbus,” soon after the Revolution, says:





*From a picture by Trumbull*

THE BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL, NEAR BOSTON. JUNE 7, 1775  
General Putnam is shown at the extreme left, striving to stop the retreat



## BUNKER HILL

There strides bold Putnam, and from all the plains,  
Calls the third host, the tardy rear sustains,  
And, 'mid the whizzing deaths that fill the air,  
Waves back his sword, and dares the following war.

Putnam's retreat marks the end of the Battle of Bunker Hill. The Americans had lost the battle, but they had gained a victory. They had proved their mettle; they had forced the British back again and again, and given the British officers such an opinion of their valor and marksmanship that many times afterward during the Revolution the English generals, especially Howe, hesitated to attack when they might have done so. At White Plains and at the Battle of Brooklyn Heights the influence of Bunker Hill was felt, and prevented American defeat. The Battle of Bunker Hill encouraged wavering Americans to join the patriot side, and heartened all the colonies. Howe might well have said with the general of old, "Another such victory, and we are undone!"

"I wish we could sell them another hill at the same price," said General Greene. Washington declared that now there could be no doubt that the liberties of the people were secure. Benjamin

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Franklin prophesied that England had lost her colonies forever.

Israel Putnam said nothing that has been handed down to us. He had fought in the battle, and that was enough for him.

XVII  
AT NEW YORK



## XVII

### AT NEW YORK

**T**HE morning after the Battle of Bunker Hill, Daniel Putnam, who had faithfully staid by the Inmans during this trying time, at last felt that he could leave them and hasten to Cambridge. He had heard that his father was safe, but could hardly believe it, so many were the tales of the danger he had been in. He was much relieved, therefore, when, after some search, he found him in charge of the workmen who were fortifying Prospect Hill, where the troops had retreated. The General was dashing about as if he had not been up for two nights and a day before. He wore the same clothes he had on when Daniel left him, and said he had not put them off nor washed himself for thirty-eight hours. Daniel said he certainly looked it! He and the officers near persuaded the valiant old gentleman to go to his quarters and take some refreshment and rest.

## ISRAEL PUTNAM

On the second of July, 1775, under the branches of the elm-tree which still stands on Harvard Common, Washington, who had just arrived in Cambridge from Philadelphia, took formal command of the Continental army. He had brought with him commissions from Congress for four major-generals: Ward, Charles Lee, Philip Schuyler and Putnam. Putnam's was the only one he ordered delivered at once upon his arrival. There was some doubt about the suitability of the others, but there was no doubt about his.

Washington was not acquainted with Putnam when he came, but he soon grew to know and like him. One day, observing him directing the soldiers in the making of some defenses, Washington said, "You seem to have the faculty, sir, of infusing your own industrious spirit into all the workmen you employ." In one of his letters from Cambridge to the President of Congress about the same time, he speaks of Putnam as "a most valuable man, and a fine executive officer."

The Father of his Country was, as we all know, a serious person, but Putnam, on one occasion, was too much for even his gravity. One day General



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Washington, looking out from an upper window, saw the following astounding sight: General Putnam at full gallop on horseback, holding a very large, fat lady astride in front of his saddle! It was one of the few times in Washington's life that he was overcome with laughter. When he could control his features he went downstairs and learned that the woman was a dangerous spy whom Putnam had discovered and lost no time in bringing to headquarters. Washington was one of those who called Putnam "Old Put," and the nickname shows the affection in which the great man held our hero.

The British had not moved from Boston, with the exception of their action at Bunker Hill. The Americans were still besieging them. Putnam continued to work as hard as ever, directing the building of earthworks on Prospect and Winter Hills. Once he noticed a man hanging back from work. He told him to place some sods on the wall, saying, "You are a soldier, I suppose?" The man did not obey the order at once. "Oh, I see you are an officer," said the old General, and immediately went to work and put the sods in position himself. Mean-

## ISRAEL PUTNAM

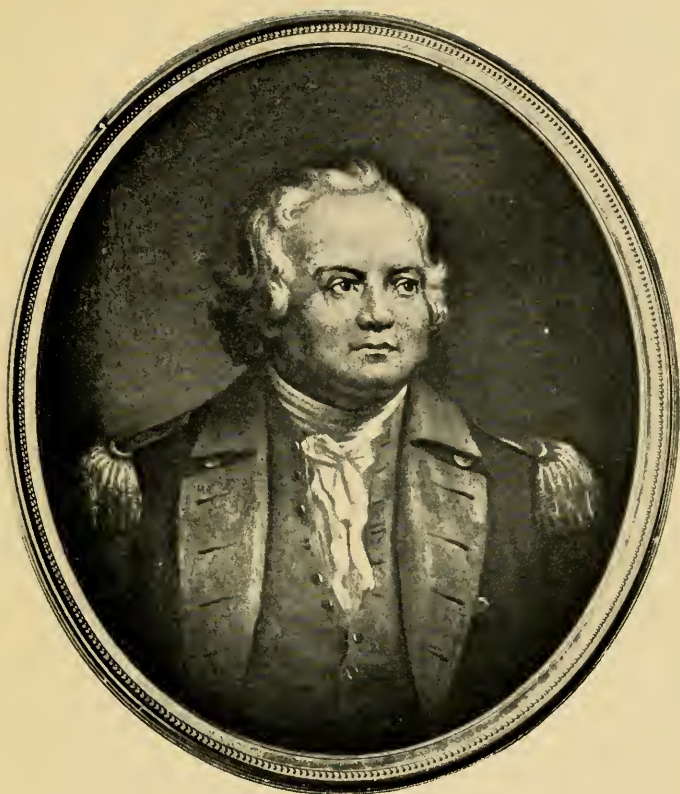
while, the balls were continually pouring in from the British forts, killing the men and tearing the works.

The Americans could not accomplish anything of importance for many months on account of their scarcity of ammunition and cannon. At last, in the following spring, Washington received a number of cannon brought by Henry Knox from Ticonderoga on sledges. He resolved to seize Dorchester Heights. At the council of war, where the officers met to plan the attack, Putnam was restless, continually going to doors and windows, to see what was going on outside.

“Sit down, General Putnam,” Washington begged; “we must have your advice and counsel in this matter, where the responsibility of its execution is devolved upon you.”

“Oh, my dear General,” answered Putnam, “you may plan the battle to suit yourself, and I will fight it!”

The plan at that time was to have four thousand men embark on the Charles River under the general command of Putnam, capture Beacon Hill and the Neck, while the British were engaged at Dor-



*Israel Putnam*

FROM A PORTRAIT BY TRUMBULL



## AT NEW YORK

chester Heights, which it was supposed that they intended attacking; but later circumstances made this plan impracticable, and Washington himself seized Dorchester Heights on the night of March 4, under cover of a cannonading of Somerville, East Cambridge, and Roxbury.

The British were now at the mercy of the besiegers, and soon after Howe began to embark his troops. Boston was completely evacuated on the morning of March 30, and Putnam led the American troops into their regained city, amid great rejoicings from the patriots who had been cooped up there all winter.

Soon after, Putnam was sent by Washington to New York, to superintend the preparations for defense there. Putnam had his headquarters at No. 1 Broadway, where his family and Aaron Burr, then a young man of twenty and his aide-de-camp, joined him. There were many Tories in town, and Putnam had to put the city under martial law to prevent disturbances. Washington soon arrived, and preparations went on as quickly as possible for fortifying Brooklyn Heights and other points, sinking ships in the channels of the Hudson and the

## ISRAEL PUTNAM

East River to prevent the British navy passing above them, and so on.

General Howe had sailed for Halifax, and did not come to New York till the last of June. But then he arrived in full force, with more than a hundred men-of-war and transports. He seized Staten Island without any difficulty, for the Americans had few heavy cannon, and landed all his men there. The British ships managed to get past the obstructions in the Hudson and the East River, also.

About this time Putnam heard of a man named Bushnell, who was so much ahead of his times that while he was at college he had invented a sort of submarine. He called it *The American Turtle*.

Putnam sent Major Aaron Burr to invite the inventor to come to see him. He came, with a model of the *Turtle*, which was examined and approved by Putnam and other officers. Bushnell was given money to build his machine.

In ten days the "submarine" was finished. It lived up to its name, for it looked something like a large sea-turtle. It had an air-tight compartment large enough to contain a man, and an apparatus for rowing. There was an opening at the bottom,

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which admitted water, which made the boat descend. Two brass forcing pumps, worked by the operator, forced out the water, and permitted the boat to rise. To this vessel was attached by a screw a powder magazine made out of two pieces of hollowed oak timber. This the operator could release when he wished to. Inside the magazine, there was a piece of clockwork, which could be set for any desired time, and at the end of that time released a strong lock, which produced the explosion.

The only difficulty was, who was to go down with the *Turtle*? The inventor himself could not, because he was an invalid. His brother, however, who understood the mechanism, said he would go. But at the last minute he fell sick. A call for volunteers was sent out, and finally Abijah Shipman, called "Long Bige," a sergeant from New London, responded.

The rest of the story is told in a contemporary journal, *Noah's Messenger*. It may or may not be true, but anyway it sounds so. "Long Bige," it seems, was quite a character, a regular Yankee, and was passionately devoted to his quid of tobacco.

Before daylight, on a July morning, he got on

## ISRAEL PUTNAM

board the torpedo, intending to get under the bottom of the *Eagle*, the flagship of Admiral Howe. Putnam, Heath, Knowlton, Burr and other officers accompanied him to shore, where he was to embark.

Abijah went on board the *Turtle*, and was about to screw himself in the air-tight compartment, when he suddenly stuck his head out.

"Say, who's got a quid of tobacco?" he asked. "This old piece won't last, anyhow." He pulled out an ounce or more of the weed and threw it away.

The officers laughed. They were not in the habit of chewing. Not one had a quid of tobacco.

"You see how it is," said Putnam, jokingly, "we continental officers are too poor to raise even a tobacco plug amongst us. But wait—tomorrow, after you have done your duty, some of the southern officers shall give you an order for a keg of Old Virginia."

This promise did not console Abijah. "Mind, Gen'ral, if the old *Turtle* doesn't do her duty," he warned, "it's all because I go to sea without tobacco."

He screwed himself in, the machine was towed



## AT NEW YORK

into the river, cast off, and disappeared under the water. Putnam and the others waited an hour or more on the Battery, expected every moment to see the *Eagle* blown up. But nothing occurred.

Morning came, and they were certain that something had happened to poor Abijah. But suddenly Putnam, scanning the water through his field glasses, exclaimed, "There he is!" Sure enough, the top of the machine could be plainly seen emerging from the water in a little bay to the left of the *Eagle*. The sentinel on the ship saw it also, and fired a volley of musketry at it. The *Turtle* discreetly ducked, while the *Eagle*, much alarmed, got under way in great haste. Putnam sent boats out from shore to pick up Abijah, if they could find him. He was taken up in his boat finally near Governor's Island. He had cast off the magazine, and it exploded somewhere in the harbor an hour after, throwing up water in every direction. Though it did no harm, it frightened the rest of the men-of-war, and made them evacuate the harbor for a time.

Abijah said on landing:

"Just as I said, Gen'ral! it all failed for want of

## ISRAEL PUTNAM

that quid of tobacco. You see I am narvous without it. I got under the *Eagle's* bottom, but somehow the screw struck the iron bar, that passed from the rudder pintle, and wouldn't hold on, anyhow I could fix it. Just then I let go the oar to feel for a quid, to steady my nerves, and I hadn't any. The tide swept me under her counter, and away I slipped top o' water. I couldn't manage to get back, so I pulled the lock, and let the thunder-box slide. I say, can't you raise a quid among you now?"

Abijah was too much of a hoodoo for *The American Turtle*. She was not tried again.

Among the British officers on Staten Island was Major James Moncreiffe, whom Putnam had known during the French war, and whom he had greeted so enthusiastically at Cambridge at the exchange of prisoners. Moncreiffe had a daughter Margaret, a beautiful, vivacious girl, fourteen years old. She was at this time in Elizabeth, New Jersey, but was very anxious to visit her father on Staten Island. To do this, she had to pass through the American lines. Major Moncreiffe wrote to Putnam, asking for a pass for her. He did not address him as "General," because, considering Putnam a rebel, he

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thought he had no right to the title. Margaret was afraid this omission would make trouble, so she wrote to Putnam herself, begging that he overlook it. Putnam's reply was dictated by his own kindness, but written by his secretary, Aaron Burr, so it is better expressed than many of his notes. He said that the omission of his title did not bother him in the least, nor influence his conduct in the matter of giving the pass. "As an officer he [her father] is my enemy, and obliged to act as such, be his private sentiments what they will. As a man I owe him no enmity; but, far from it, will with pleasure do any kind office in my power for him or any of his connections." He went on to say that he could probably obtain a pass for her later, though not at the present time, and, in the meantime, he invited her to visit his wife and two daughters, at his house.

The Tory girl accepted, and this is what she thought of the household when she arrived.

"When I arrived in Broadway (a street so called), where General Putnam resided, I was received with great tenderness by Mrs. Putnam and her daughters, and on the following day I was in-

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troduced by them to General and Mrs. Washington, who likewise made it their study to show me every mark of regard; but I seldom was allowed to be alone, although sometimes, indeed, I found an opportunity to escape to the gallery, on the top of the house, where my chief delight was to view with a telescope our fleet and army on Staten Island. My amusements were few; the good Mrs. Putnam employed me and her daughters constantly to spin flax for shirts for the American soldiers, indolence in America being totally discouraged; and I likewise worked for General Putnam, who, though not an accomplished *muscadin*, like our *dilettanti* of St. James's Street, was certainly one of the best characters in the world; his heart being composed of those noble materials which equally command respect and admiration."

At a dinner one day at which Washington was present, Margaret refused to join in a toast to the Continental Congress. This somewhat embarrassed the company, she says; but "my good friend, General Putnam, as usual, apologized, and assured them I did not mean to offend." They told her they would forgive her if, when she dined at General

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Howe's, she would drink to the health of General Washington or General Putnam.

A few days later, Margaret was allowed to go over to Staten Island, on a barge. She was at once invited to Howe's to dinner. She says she almost died of shyness at being obliged to encounter the gaze of some forty or fifty other guests at the dinner; but she apparently soon recovered herself, for being asked, according to the prevailing military etiquette, to propose a toast, she gave, "General Putnam." A Colonel at her elbow said in a low voice, "You must not give him here."

"Oh, by all means," said Sir William Howe, mischievously, "if he be the lady's sweetheart I can have no objection to drink his health."

Margaret was more embarrassed than ever. She wished herself a thousand miles away. To divert the attention of the company from herself, she gave her host a note from Putnam which she had been commissioned to deliver. She was a little ashamed of the spelling of her Yankee friend, and we can't blame her. This was the note:

"*Gin'ral* Putnam's compliments to Major Moncrieffe, has made him a present of a fine daughter,

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if he don't *lick* [like] her he must send her back again, and he will provide her with a good *twig* [Whig] husband."

Evidently Margaret's father *did* like her, for we don't hear of her going back to her rebel friends again, or of her getting a *twig* husband, either.

Brooklyn Heights is across the East River from New York, and commands it very much as Dorchester Heights commands Boston. In August, the British on Staten Island, who had now been reënforced by Clinton's and Cornwallis's armies, and numbered more than thirty-one thousand, were seen preparing to make an aggressive movement, and it was soon evident that they were going to cross to Long Island. Upon this, Washington reënforced the garrison on Brooklyn Heights, which was under the command of Greene, and as Greene was sick with a fever, he presently sent General Putnam over to take command.

Putnam had only been there two days when General Howe with his army managed to get in his rear, surprise and overpower his picket on the Jamaica Road, and win what was called the Battle of Long Island in the rear of the Brooklyn works. Putnam

## AT NEW YORK

was not considered responsible for this defeat, as he had not had time to become acquainted with the ground, and had acted with Washington's assistance in posting his men. It was a sad defeat, however, for the American side, and would have been worse, if Howe had not remembered Bunker Hill and decided not to make a direct assault on Brooklyn Heights, but to besiege it instead. A few nights later, Washington, with masterly strategy, managed to bring all his men away from Long Island in boats without Howe's perceiving it. Putnam helped in this brilliant movement; and Washington left him in command of the city of New York, while he took a part of the forces above New York along the Harlem River toward White Plains.

About two weeks after, on September 15, Putnam, who was preparing to evacuate New York, which could not long be held now that the British possessed Brooklyn Heights, heard the sound of cannon from the East River, at what was then Kip's Bay, now the foot of 34th Street. He galloped to the spot, meeting on the way Washington, who was riding from his headquarters on Harlem Heights in the same direction. The two leaders found that the men

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who had been posted to guard the East River bank were fleeing before the advance of the British, who had landed.

Washington and Putnam did their best to rally the men, but finding this was impossible, Putnam dashed back to New York, to save his troops there, if possible, from being cut off by the British. He found they had already been started by Major Burr, and urged them on. It was a very hot day, and many of the men fainted. Putnam's horse was covered with foam; he was everywhere, encouraging the troops. They would certainly have been intercepted, however, if it had not been for Mrs. Lindley Murray, a Quaker lady favoring the American side, who lived in a handsome house on the hill still called Murray Hill. She sent an invitation to General Howe and his officers to come and lunch with her. They accepted—and she detained them so long with her delightful hospitality, that, by the time luncheon was over, Putnam and his hot and tired men had safely reached Washington's army at Harlem Heights.

In spite of this lucky escape, the Continental army was greatly depressed. They had surrendered their



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position, and had been ignominiously chased by the British, who, in a skirmish soon after this on Claremont Heights, sounded the fox-hunting call on their bugles while they pursued the Americans as if they were foxes. They rallied at Morningside Heights and at White Plains, but, soon after, Fort Washington, which General Putnam and General Greene had considered safe, fell into the hands of the British, and Fort Lee, on the opposite side of the Hudson, had to be evacuated.

The British now were in possession of Rhode Island, Long Island, the city of New York, Staten Island, and almost all of New Jersey. Washington's army dwindled to three thousand ragged and starving men; whole brigades were deserting him at one time. Howe had offered a full pardon to all who would take the oath of allegiance, and many did so. Washington began his retreat. He was driven from Fort Lee to Newark, from Newark to New Brunswick, from New Brunswick to Princeton, from Princeton to Trenton, Cornwallis pursuing him with his army, often in plain sight. It was the darkest period of the American cause; but no matter who desponded or deserted, Putnam never

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gave up courage. He supported Washington on the retreat, and was one of the last of the fugitive army to cross the Delaware at Trenton early in December.

From there Putnam was sent to take command at Philadelphia, where a British attack was expected. Congress was so frightened that it left the city and went to Baltimore. Putnam fell to work on defenses; but at Christmas time came the glorious news of the capture of Trenton, which greatly improved the situation. Putnam was now needed to help Washington in New Jersey, and he spent the rest of the winter at Princeton. While here he did not take part in any large movement, but did good service in harassing the British in their winter quarters at Brunswick, cutting off their supply trains, taking prisoners, etc. He took nearly one thousand prisoners and more than one hundred and twenty baggage wagons during the winter. There was no one who could surpass him at this sort of hand-to-hand work. Major Burr was again on his staff during this winter, and wrote, "I am at present quite happy in the esteem and entire confidence of my good old General." No one guessed then that such

a promising and brilliant young man as Burr would fall into disgrace in later life.

The "good old General," as usual, was showing great kindness to his prisoners. When he came to Princeton, after the Battle of Princeton, he found a wounded Scotchman there, who had received little attention from the surgeon. Putnam at once got medical attendance for him and did everything in his power to make him comfortable.

"Pray, sir, what countryman are you?" the wounded man is said to have asked Putnam.

"An American."

"Not a Yankee?" incredulously.

"A full-blooded one," said Putnam, good-humoredly.

"I am sorry for that," answered the Scotchman. "I did not think there could be so much goodness and generosity in an American, or, indeed, in anybody but a Scotchman!"

This same man, Captain McPherson, was very anxious to have a friend in the British army at Brunswick come to see him. Putnam hated to refuse, but he had a force of only a few hundred troops at that time, and did not wish to expose his

## ISRAEL PUTNAM

weakness to the enemy. However, he thought of a plan by which he could avoid this, while letting the sick man see his friend. He sent a flag of truce to the British camp, with a request to let the visitor be escorted to the American camp after dark. That evening, he had lights put in all the rooms of the College buildings and in every window of every house in town. While the visitor was talking to his friend, Putnam's force continually marched past his window, sometimes in small detachments, sometimes altogether. The visitor, when he returned to Brunswick, reported to the British commander that the American troops at Princeton numbered at least four or five thousand men!

XVIII

IN TROUBLE AND OUT AGAIN



## XVIII

### IN TROUBLE AND OUT AGAIN

**I**N May, 1778, Putnam was placed by Washington in command of the Highlands of the Hudson. He was supported by Brigadier-General Alexander McDougall, at Peekskill, to whom General Washington wrote, when he told him that Putnam was to have the chief command of that department:

“You are well acquainted with the old gentleman’s temper; he is active, disinterested, and open to conviction, and I therefore hope, that, by affording him the advice and assistance which your knowledge of the post enables you to do, you will be very happy in your command under him.”

Soon after Putnam took command, Edmund Palmer, a Tory spy, was captured inside the American lines and condemned to be shot. Sir Henry Clinton, in charge of the British troops in New York, thought he could frighten Putnam into letting

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him go. He sent up to claim Palmer, saying that the American general had no right to have him executed, and threatening vengeance if the execution was carried out.

Putnam sent back this reply :

“HEADQUARTERS, 7 August, 1777.

“Edmund Palmer, an officer in the enemy’s service, was taken as a spy lurking within our lines ; he has been tried as a spy, condemned as a spy, and shall be executed as a spy, and the flag is ordered to depart immediately.

“ISRAEL PUTNAM.

“P. S.—He has been accordingly executed.”

In the fall of 1777, Putnam was obliged to surrender Peekskill and the other forts on the Hudson to Sir Henry Clinton, who moved up the river and succeeded in out-maneuvering him. This blow was counteracted by Burgoyne’s surrender at Saratoga Springs, and Putnam with the troops was enabled to reoccupy the forts. During this time so full of disaster from a military point of view, Putnam suffered two personal bereavements ; first, the death of his stepson, a promising young man, of whom he was very fond, who died in his headquarters at



## IN TROUBLE AND OUT AGAIN

Peekskill, and then his wife, who died there just about the time of Burgoyne's surrender.

Putnam was very anxious to attack New York, and planned to send down for that purpose some reënforcements which were soon to arrive from the Northern Department, which were no longer needed there after Burgoyne's surrender. He was full of these plans one day of October, 1777, when a young man, not yet twenty, in a lieutenant-colonel's uniform, rode up to his quarters, with a message from Washington. It was Washington's aide-de-camp, Alexander Hamilton. He had been sent to get reënforcements for Washington's army in Pennsylvania, and told General Putnam that Washington wished the very troops he, Putnam, was planning to send to New York.

After delivering this message in a curt, abrupt manner, rather galling to the older man, Hamilton mounted a fresh horse and went on to Albany.

A week later he returned, and found that Putnam, still full of his New York project, had not sent the required detachments. Hamilton was very angry.

"I am astonished and alarmed beyond measure,"

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he sent word to Putnam, "that all his Excellency's views have been hitherto frustrated, and that no single step of those I mentioned to you has been taken to afford him the help he absolutely stands in need of, and by delaying which, the cause of America is put to the utmost conceivable hazard. . . . How the non-compliance can be answered to General Washington, you can best determine.

"I now, Sir, in the most explicit terms, by his Excellency's authority, give it as a positive order from him, that all the Continental troops under your command may be immediately marched to King's Ferry, there to cross the river, and hasten to reënforce the army under him. . . ."

These were strong words from a boy not yet twenty, with little military experience, to a General of Putnam's age, and Putnam felt that they contained "some most unjust and injurious reflections" upon himself, and sent the letter to Washington with that remark. He could not get it out of his head that the troops were needed in New York.

Washington replied, mildly but firmly, "I cannot but say, there has been more delay in the march

## IN TROUBLE AND OUT AGAIN

of the troops, than I think necessary; and I could wish that in future my orders may be complied with without arguing upon the propriety of them."

Putnam realized he was in the wrong. The truth of it was, he was growing old, a trifle "sot in his ways," as his New England friends would have said; but he was not too old to learn a lesson, and he never repeated the mistake.

Another trouble was in store for Putnam. The New York people did not like him. He had been too lenient to the deserted and suffering families of Tories, and had too readily granted passes in and out of the American lines. Politics also had something to do with his unpopularity. There was a good deal of jealousy between New York and New England, and Putnam was a dyed-in-the-wool New Englander. At any rate, the feeling, without any real fault, so far as we can tell, on Putnam's side, became so strong that Washington thought it best to remove him from the command of the Highlands. General McDougall was given the post. Meanwhile, in response to a demand from Congress, Washington arranged for a Court of Inquiry which should investigate the losses of the posts on the

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Hudson during the fall before, and Putnam's conduct therein.

The "good old General" showed his patriotism by taking these humiliations in good part. All he wished for was to serve his country, in whatever way was permitted him. He returned to Connecticut and was employed in recruiting. When he had finished this duty, and learned that Congress had not yet decided upon his case and his rank was still in doubt, he did indeed write a pathetic note to Washington.

"I have waited with the utmost impatience for orders," he said, "but none having arrived . . . I think there must be some mistake. . . . I must beg that the Hon'ble Congress will take this matter into their consideration, and grant that I may be acquitted and that with Honor or tried by a Genl. Court Martial . . . so that My Character Might stand in a clearer light to the world; but to be posted here as a public spectator for every ill Minded person to make their remarks upon, I think is very poor encouragement for any person to venture their lives and fortunes in the Service."

By the time this note reached Washington, the

## IN TROUBLE AND OUT AGAIN

investigating committee had reported to Congress that Putnam was not to blame for the loss of the forts, and Congress had accepted the decision and restored to him his old standing in the army. He served again on the Hudson for a short time, and was then sent to Connecticut to protect the country along the Sound from marauding parties which the British sent out from the neighborhood of New York.

During the winter of 1778 some of the Connecticut troops mutinied because of the great hardships they suffered and the total stoppage of their pay. They assembled under arms, determined to march to Hartford and demand redress of the Assembly. Putnam heard of it, and instantly galloped to the spot. He made them the following speech, in his earnest, blunt way:

“My brave lads, whither are you going? Do you intend to desert your officers, and to invite the enemy to follow you into the country? In whose cause have you been fighting and suffering so long? Is it not your own? Have you no property? no parents? no wives? no children? You have thus far behaved like men—the world is full of your

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praises—and posterity will stand astonished at your deeds; but not if you spoil it all at last. Don't you consider how much the country is distressed by the war; and that your officers have not been any better paid than yourselves? But we all expect better times, and then the country will do us ample justice. Let us all stand by one another, then, and fight it out like brave soldiers. Think what a shame it would be for Connecticut men to run away from their officers!"

He then rode along the line, and the men who but a moment before had been ready to desert, presented arms and saluted him in the usual way. That was the end of the mutiny.

In February, 1779, General Putnam was at Horseneck, a part of Greenwich, Connecticut, with a small picket of about one hundred and fifty men, when he heard that the Tory, Governor Tryon of New York, was approaching with fifteen hundred men to surprise the American outpost and seize the salts works near Greenwich. Putnam determined to delay the British as much as possible, though he knew he had no chance of success against them. He stationed himself with his men on top of a hill in



PUTNAM'S ESCAPE AT HORSE NECK





## IN TROUBLE AND OUT AGAIN

Greenwich, and as the British came near, sent them several volleys from his two pieces of artillery, which did them some damage, but not much. The British dragoons prepared to charge. Putnam immediately ordered his men to seek refuge in a swamp near by, which was inaccessible to horses. He himself started to ride to Stamford and get reënforcements. The dragoons saw him and gave chase. For a quarter of a mile they pursued him, and then the road reached a point where it passed by a steep precipice. Down a part of this precipice were some rough stones, placed to form irregular steps from the plain below, by those who wished to make a short cut to the little Episcopal Church on the hill. The rest of the way was steep and rocky; no one had ever dreamed of descending it except on foot.

Putnam heard the ringing hoofs behind him. He did not hesitate a second, but spurred his horse and dashed over the edge of the precipice! Some say he took the stone steps, others that he descended in zig-zags; but he gained in safety the plains below. The dragoons fired at him as he descended, and one of the bullets pierced his military cap. None dared

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follow. Putnam, at the bottom, waved his sword tauntingly in their direction, and rode on towards Stamford.

A woman in a farmhouse along the way heard the beat of horse-hoofs and rushed to the door to call her four little children out of the way. She saw the hatless General, "his long hair blowing about his round, kindly face." He stopped for a moment on his way by, reining up his horse on his haunches.

"Take your children in," he shouted. "The British are upon us!" The next instant he was gone.

When he returned to Horseneck with a reënforcement, he found the British had left. Governor Tryon, in recognition of Putnam's bravery on this occasion, and also of his kindness to prisoners, is said to have sent him a new suit of military clothes, with a hat to replace the one shot through by the British bullet.

I think that Putnam on this occasion leaped straight into the hearts of American boys forever. It was a fitting climax to a gallant career; and it is almost the last thing I have to tell you of the old hero.

XIX

A SUNNY OLD AGE



## XIX

### A SUNNY OLD AGE

**I**N December of the same year, Putnam, who had been visiting at his home with Daniel, now a Major in the army, was beginning his journey on horseback back to the army's winter quarters in Morristown, New Jersey, when he felt a numbness in his right side, which rapidly grew worse. It was a paralytic stroke. He dismounted at the house of a friend, and after a while partially recovered and was able to return home; but he soon found, to his great sorrow, that he could not resume his duties in the army.

He lived eleven years longer, and was able to walk and ride horseback. His contemporaries draw a pleasant picture of the old gentleman, as sunny as ever in his old age, the pride of the countryside, riding here and there to visit friends, or telling stories to visitors in his own home.

Two of his favorite stories at this time were about

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duelling, a practice of which he strongly disapproved. It seems that once, without intending it, Putnam had offended a brother officer, who challenged him to a duel. Putnam did not refuse.

At the appointed time, the officer went to the duelling ground, with a sword and pistols. As soon as he entered the field, Putnam, who was standing at the opposite end, about thirty rods away, leveled his musket and fired in his direction.

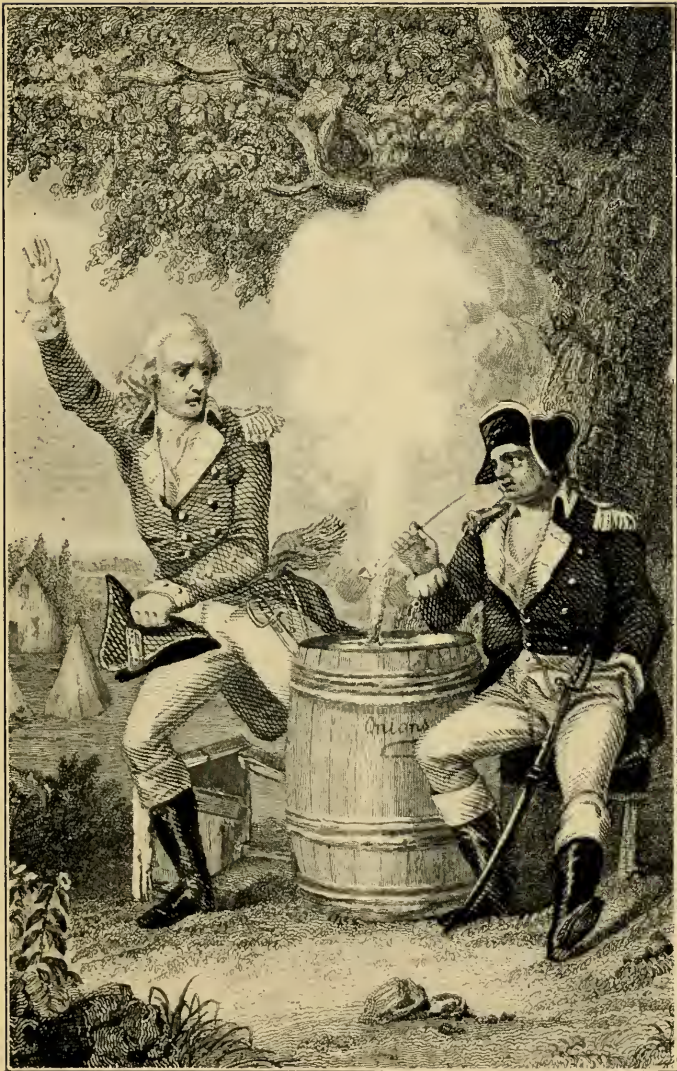
The astonished officer ran towards him. Putnam deliberately reloaded his gun.

"Stop!" cried the other. "What are you doing? Is this the conduct of an American officer, and a man of honor?"

"What am I doing?" Putnam replied. "A pretty question to put to a man whom you intended to murder! I'm going to kill you; and if you don't beat a retreat in less time than it would take old Heath to hang a Tory, you're a gone dog!" As he said this, Putnam lifted his gun, all ready to fire.

The officer turned and fled!

The other story was about an English officer, a prisoner on parole, who took offense at some re-



PUTNAM'S DUEL WITH THE BRITISH OFFICER





## A SUNNY OLD AGE

marks of General Putnam's about the British. He challenged him. Putnam accepted the challenge, on condition that he should select the weapons. The next morning, they met. The Englishman found Putnam sitting by the side of what seemed to be a barrel of gunpowder, smoking a pipe. There was an opening in the top of the barrel, and a match had been put in the opening.

Putnam asked the Englishman to sit down on the other side of the cask; then he set fire to the match with his pipe, remarked that there was an equal chance for each of them when the gunpowder should explode, and calmly went on smoking his pipe.

The Englishman watched the match for a moment, as the flame crept towards the powder. When it was a few inches away, he decided to go—and he went very quickly.

“Ah,” cried “Old Put,” “you are just as brave a man as I took you to be. This is nothing but a barrel of onions, with a few grains of powder on the head, to try you by. But you don't like the smell.”

Putnam received two most appreciative letters from Washington after his retirement. One said:

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“DEAR SIR—I am very happy to learn from your letter of the 29th handed me by Major Humphreys, that the present state of your health is so flattering, and that it promises you the prospect of being in a condition to make a visit to your old associates some time this campaign. I wish it were in my power to congratulate you on a complete recovery. I should feel a sincere satisfaction in such an event, and I hope for it heartily, with the rest of your friends in this quarter.

“I am, dear Sir, &c.,

“G. WASHINGTON.”

The other contained the following sentences :

“I can assure you that, among the many worthy and meritorious officers with whom I have had the happiness to be connected in service through the course of this war, and from whose cheerful assistance and advice I have received much support and confidence, in the various and trying vicissitudes of a complicated contest, the name of a Putnam is not forgotten; nor will it be but with that stroke of time which shall obliterate from my mind the remembrance of all those toils and fatigues, through which

## A SUNNY OLD AGE

we have struggled for the preservation and establishment of the rights, liberties, and independence of our country.”

Needless to say, Putnam cherished this letter with great pride.

Putnam passed his last years on his old farm in Pomfret. Daniel was married and living on a farm nearby; and Peter Schuyler Putnam, once the baby of the family, now grown up and married, lived with the General.

In 1790 Putnam died, after a few days' illness. He was buried in the Brooklyn graveyard, and over his tomb was placed a marble slab, with the following epitaph, written by his friend, Timothy Dwight, afterwards the president of Yale College:

TO THE MEMORY  
OF  
ISRAEL PUTNAM, Esquire,  
SENIOR MAJOR-GENERAL IN THE ARMIES  
OF  
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
who  
was born at Salem,  
in the Province of Massachusetts,  
on the 7th day of January,  
A. D. 1718,

## ISRAEL PUTNAM

and died  
on the 19th day of May,  
A. D. 1790.

---

Passenger,  
if thou art a Soldier,  
drop a tear over the dust of a Hero,  
who,  
ever attentive  
to the lives and happiness of his men,  
dared to lead  
where any dared to follow;  
if a Patriot,  
remember the distinguished and gallant services  
rendered thy country,  
by the Patriot who sleeps beneath this marble;  
if thou art honest, generous, and worthy,  
render a cheerful tribute of respect  
to a man,  
whose generosity was singular,  
whose honesty was proverbial;  
who  
raised himself to universal esteem,  
and offices of eminent distinction,  
by personal worth,  
and a  
useful life.

It is a true epitaph. Not alone in a military way did Israel Putnam distinguish himself. During half a lifetime of rough days in camp, he kept

## A SUNNY OLD AGE

his personal honor clean and bright. He was a good husband, a good father, a good citizen. Through long years of bitter combat, he never went back on a friend, and never treated a prisoner taken in fair warfare as anything but a friend. There have been greater men than Israel Putnam in our country's history, men with bigger brains and cooler judgment, but there have been none more honest, brave and kind, none who have worked harder in the public service, none who have cared less about their own personal glory and reward. In the forest fighting about Crown Point, in the cold of Canada, beneath the burning sun of Cuba, on the waves of the Great Lakes, in his quiet home in Connecticut, and amid all the turmoil of the most troubled years of the Revolution, Israel Putnam threw himself, heart and soul, into his country's cause. He was an American through and through; and he has earned his place in the ranks of our country's heroes for all time.







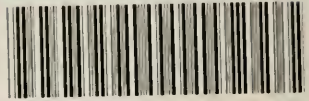








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